SERMONS
ON SPECIAL & FESTIVAL OCCASIONS

BY

HENRY JELLETT, D.D.

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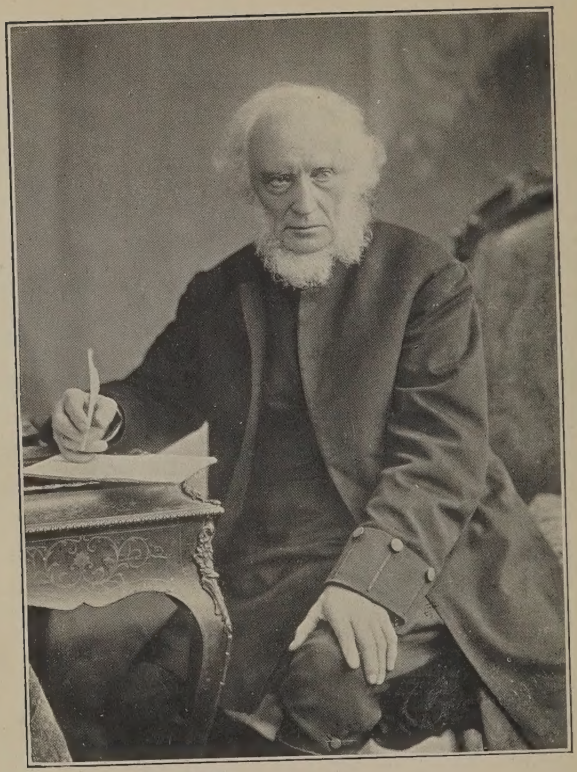

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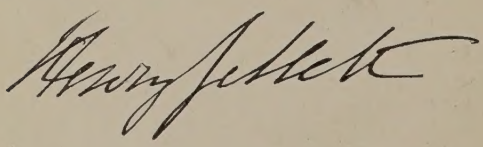

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BY

HENRY JELLETT, D.D.

SOMETIME DEAN OF S. PATRICK'S, DUBLIN, AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT REV. W. C. MAGEE, D.D., BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

J. H. BERNARD, D.D., D.C.L.

DEAN OF S. PATRICK'S

WITH PORTRAIT

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In Memoriam

PATRIS CARISSIMI

INTRODUCTION.

To the filial piety of his only surviving daughter the publication is due of this memorial volume of the sermons of one of the most distinguished and learned Irish churchmen of the last century, and I deem it an honour to be invited to write a few words of introduction, which may suggest to those who did not know him, and may recall to the memory of his friends, some of the prominent features in the character and preaching of my dear and honoured predecessor, the late Dean of St. Patrick's.

HENRY JELLETT, the third son of the Rev. Morgan Jellett, Rector of Pallasgreen, Co. Limerick (subsequently of Tullycorbet, Co. Monaghan), and his wife, Harriet Townsend, daughter of Hewitt Poole of Mayfield, Bandon, was born at his father's rectory, at Pallasgreen, 16th July, 1821. The Jelletts came of a good old Huguenot family, which has been established in Ireland since the beginning of the seventeenth century; and the sons of the rectory of Pallasgreen achieved distinction in various walks of life. The eldest, John Hewitt Jellett, became Provost of Trinity, and the youngest, who is still with us, Serjeant Hewitt Poole Jellett, K.C., is one of the most respected members of the

Irish Bar. Henry, the third boy, was educated first at a private school in North Great George's Street, Dublin, kept by a Dr. Sargent, and afterwards at the Diocesan School, Carlow, of which the head master was Dr. Jameson. It had been his father's intention to send him to sea, but at the earnest solicitation of Bishop Jebb of Limerick, who recognised the boy's abilities and steadfastness of purpose, he was encouraged to go to the University with a view to Holy Orders. From Carlow he entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1837, and took his degree as Junior Moderator in Mental and Moral Philosophy in 1842. He presently entered the Divinity School where he carried off the principal prizes, including the Elrington Prize for an essay on "The Continuance of Miraculous Gifts in the Church". He became a member of the then newly reconstituted College Historical Society, of which Magee, the future Archbishop of York, one of Jellett's most intimate friends, was Auditor, and he was also one of the Committee of the Dublin Philosophical Society, in whose *Transactions* his earliest printed essay "On the Philosophy of Sleep" appeared in 1842. Among Jellett's other college contemporaries were H. E. Chatterton, afterwards Vice-Chancellor of Ireland; C. P. Reichel, the late Bishop of Meath; and J. C. Macdonnell, Dean of Cashel and afterwards Canon of Peterborough, who is perhaps best known as the biographer of Archbishop Magee.

Jellett took orders as soon as he had reached the canonical age, being ordained deacon by Bishop Tonson of Killaloe in 1844, and priest by Whately, Archbishop of

Dublin, in the following year. For the next forty-five years he lived and worked in remote country parishes in the Co. Cork; being in succession Diocesan Curate of Cork, Cloyne and Ross; Curate of St. Peter's, Cork, 1846-1853 (where he nearly died of overwork and privation during the terrible years of cholera which followed the Irish famine); Vicar of Ballyspillane, Cloyne, 1851-1853; and Rector of Aghinagh in the Diocese of Cloyne from 1853 to 1889. On his appointment to Aghinagh he married Elizabeth Rebecca, younger daughter of James Morgan, of Tivoli House, Cork. There were eight children of the marriage, of whom two sons and one daughter are now living. Peculiarly happy in his married life, he passed many peaceful years at Aghinagh devoted to the care of his little parish and to the education of his children.

Those who knew Henry Jellett best often wondered that a man with such great gifts as a preacher and with such lofty ideals of life should have been permitted by his fellow churchmen to remain so long in comparative obscurity. Yet so it was. Jellett would never stoop to advertise himself or press forward in the race of life. He contented himself until he was fifty years of age with ministering to a few people in a lonely country village, giving them of his best, and preaching to them sermons of high excellence, for which he prepared himself by perpetual study. He published but little during these early years; a short essay on "The Irish Church and the Articles of 1615" (1850), an open letter on "The Education Question" (1866), a paper on "Ritualism" (1866)

and another on "The Historical Character of the Mosaic Account of Creation" (1867), being the only printed evidences of his industry and intellectual alertness.

With the shock of Disestablishment, however, Henry Jellett of necessity was forced into a position of some prominence. All his life long he was a High Churchman of the old school, and his opinions were not those which were popular among Irish clergy and laity in the seventies. And so he presently found himself taking an active part in the debates of the General Synod, and nearly always voting in the minority with those who were opposed to hasty or revolutionary legislation. The minutes of the Revision Committee clearly show how much the Church of Ireland owes to a few strong and learned men like him, who did not lose their heads when the work of revising the Prayer Book was entrusted to them, and whose ecclesiastical horizon was wider than that of the majority.

Jellett was also an excellent administrator and a very good man of business. This was amply proved in Cork, where he was a member of all the important Church Committees; and it is now many years since he took his place as a leading member of the Standing Committee of the General Synod, of the Representative Church Body, of the Incorporated Society for promoting Protestant schools in Ireland, and of numerous other boards, educational and philanthropic. But it is no disparagement to his labours in these various directions to say that he never did a greater service to the Church than in the stormy years of the debates on Prayer Book Revision.

In 1869 his life-long friend William Magee, who had just become Bishop of Peterborough, made Jellett one of his examining chaplains, a post which he filled for twenty years. Many years after, an affectionate tribute to his memory appeared in the columns of the *Guardian* from one of the many candidates for ordination whom he had helped by the kindness of his counsel, and the holiness of his example. The Bishop of Peterborough was anxious that his friend would accept a living in his diocese, but Jellett was too much attached to Ireland, and too careless of personal advancement, to agree to the proposal; and so to the great benefit of the Irish Church he remained in her service to the end.

By this time, he was well known as a powerful preacher, and his sermons were much in request. In 1875 and on several subsequent occasions he was Select Preacher before the University of Dublin, and in 1877 at Cambridge. A very characteristic sermon entitled "What is the alternative if we neglect Christianity?" was preached in Belfast in 1876 and afterwards printed. In 1881 he was elected Donnellan Lecturer at Trinity College, Dublin, and delivered a course of lectures on "The Christian Life" in the Chapel of the College, which were afterwards published (Geo. Bell & Sons, 1884).

In 1878 many persons hoped that the Diocese of Cork would choose him as Bishop; but his ecclesiastical opinions were not altogether palatable to a majority of the electors, and so he was left at his country rectory for eleven years longer, although he was given the dignity of the

Archdeaconry of Cloyne in 1884. At the age of sixty-eight he was at last offered the Deanery of St. Patrick's Cathedral, in which he had for a long time held a Prebend; and here he found himself in what was probably the most congenial position that he could have been offered. He loved the Cathedral, and did much to promote the reverent and dignified rendering of its services, in which it was his delight to take part; and he never preached with greater effectiveness than at St. Patrick's. He always had something useful to say, and his magnificent delivery and venerable bearing lent weight to his words. One could never forget in listening to him that a sermon was something more than a moral essay; and when the Dean preached there was always a fine congregation. The Primate (Dr. Alexander) said of his sermons that they were "earnest because they did not aim at earnestness, but at truth," and those who read the sermons printed in this volume will not doubt the justice of this appreciation. Dr. Jellett never aimed at rhetoric; he was accustomed to think consecutively, and to arrange his thoughts in logical order; but of the devices of the rhetorician he had none. His sermons reflect faithfully the man, strong, single-hearted, learned, devout. It has not been easy to make a selection from the large number of carefully written sermons by Dean Jellett which are extant, but his daughter has been aided in her choice by the good offices of his friends, and amongst them of the Rev. Stanford F. H. Robinson, F.S A., Treasurer's Vicar of St. Patrick's.

The end of his long life came after he had held the Deanery twelve years, during which he gained an ever-increasing measure of affection and respect from every one connected with the Cathedral which he ruled. He passed away on 31st December, 1901, and was buried in the Cathedral Close, where his wife now rests beside him. A good portrait of him in his venerable age (by Miss S. Purser, R.H.A.), was presented to the Deanery by his old friend, the late Provost of Trinity, Dr. Salmon; and a Crucifixion Window of painted glass of singular beauty (by the late Mr. Kempe) was placed in the North Chapel of the Cathedral in his memory by his many friends, with the following inscription:—

"In gloriam Dei et in piam memoriam adm. rev. Henrici Jellett, S.T.P., olim Archidiaconi Clonensis, et Prebendarii de Tymothan, tunc per duodecim annos hujus ecclesiae cathedralis S. Patricii decani; facundia, doctrina, constantia, humilitate pariter insignis, has vitreas amici ejus posuerunt. Obdormivit in Christo Jesu ultima die anni incarnationis Domini nostri MDCCCI."

It fell to my lot, as his successor at St. Patrick's, no less than as one to whom he had shown many kindnesses, and who had been permitted the great privilege of ministering to him at the beginning of his last illness, to express the thoughts which suggested the words of the inscription; and I will conclude this imperfect tribute to his memory by repeating part of what I said when the window was dedicated:—

"Of his character it is, indeed, unnecessary to speak,

even if it were possible for me to speak dispassionately. But this much may be said: We have placed no words on the tablets beneath these windows which are not literally true. And, first, Dean Jellett was a man of solid learning. Many a time his incisive speeches on theological subjects showed that he was a mature scholar who knew what constituted evidence and what did not. He took the wide view of a learned man. No one who heard his last speech in the Synod Hall—I think he knew it was to be his last—can forget the earnestness with which he pleaded for that large tolerance which it is, alas! impossible for ignorance to appreciate or understand. *Doctrina insignis*, he knew what were the really great issues, what were the things worth contending for. And he was an eloquent man, although he never aimed at eloquence. We who heard him preach know how he could hold the attention of a great congregation as he reasoned to them of 'righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come'. *Constantia;* stoutheartedness, that was the most obvious feature of his character. Every one who had to do with Dean Jellett knew that you could not move him by one inch from the path which he believed to be the path of duty. An opportunist policy was hateful to him; he would never ask 'Is this expedient?' but, 'Is it right?' So strenuous was he in contending for the faith of the Gospel that strangers did not always understand what was meant when they were told by those who knew him well that even deeper in his character than courage or zeal lay his humility. *Humilitate insignis.* It may

seem a paradox, but it is true. The motto of our Cathedral *Noli altum sapere*, 'Be not high-minded,' might have been the motto of the Dean's life. Not the humility which springs from timidity or incompetence, but the humility which is born of the fear of God and of the sense of God's overwhelming love in redemption. For the Cross, which is the measure and symbol of God's love to man, was ever in his thoughts. And therefore we like to think that his name will always be associated in this Church of many memories with that sacrifice of the Cross which was his hope in life and death, as it may be ours if God give us grace to follow in his steps. For only if we keep near the Cross in life can it be truly said of any of us in death as we have said of him in faith and hope, He fell asleep in Christ Jesus."

J. H. BERNARD.

The Deanery, St. Patrick's Close,
All Saints' Day, 1907.

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION - - - - - - - - - - vii

SERMON

I. THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH. Eph. iv. 4 - - - 1

Preached before the University of Dublin as a Thesis for the Degree of D.D., 4th May, 1873

II. THE PERILS OF THE CHURCH. Acts xxviii. 5 - - - 12

Preached in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, at one of the Special Services held after its restoration, May, 1878

III. EDUCATION. Job xlii. 5, 6 - - - - - - - - 22

Preached in Aghinagh Church, Co. Cork, 29th May, 1881

IV. HARMONY AND DISCORD. Ps. cxviii. 19 - - - - - 32

Preached at a Choir Festival held in Lurgan Parish Church, 8th June, 1883

V. FELLOW-WORKERS. 2 Tim. ii. 21 - - - - - - 43

Preached to the Members of the Church Workers' Association in S. Paul's, Cork, 28th January, 1886

VI. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. 2 Cor. iv. 1 - - - - - 55

Preached at an Ordination held by the Bishop of Peterborough in Peterborough Cathedral, 16th June, 1889

VII. *IN OMNIBUS CARITAS.* 1 Tim. iii. 14, 15 - - - - - 69

Preached at the Opening Service of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 14th April, 1890

SERMON PAGE

VIII. Moral Strength. 2 Tim. i. 7, 8 - - - - - 80

Preached to the Members of the Army Guild of the Holy Standard in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 15th October, 1890

IX. Growth in Secret. S. Mark iv. 26-28 - - - - 87

Preached at a Harvest Thanksgiving Service in All Saints', Raheny, 25th September, 1891

X. The Light of the World. S. John viii. 12 - - - 97

Preached in S. Peter's, Dublin, 12th November, 1897

XI. The Divine Government of Nations. Ps. xxii. 28 - 107

Preached after the death of Alexander III., Emperor of Russia, in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 4th November, 1894

XII. Satiety. Ps. cvi. 15 - - - - - - - - - 115

Preached before the University of Dublin, 31st March, 1895

XIII. The Kingdom of God. Acts i. 3; S. Matt. xxviii. 20 - 123

Preached at the Consecration of the Bishop of Killaloe in S. Fin Barr's Cathedral, Cork, 2nd February, 1897

XIV. Thankfulness. Eph. v. 20 - - - - - - 134

Preached in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 23rd October, 1898

XV. *Cogitavi Dies Antiquos.* Ps. lxxvii. 5, xxxix. 7 - - 141

Preached on the last day of the Nineteenth Century in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 31st December, 1900

XVI. A Nation's Mourning. 2 Chron. xxxv. 24 - - - 152

Preached on the Sunday after the death of H.M. Queen Victoria, in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 27th January, 1901

XVII. The Sublime Condescension. S. John i. 14 - - - 159

Preached on Christmas Day in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1892

XVIII. Faithfulness. Rev. ii. 10 - - - - - - 166

Preached on Easter Day in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 29th March, 1891

SERMON PAGE

XIX. *Sursum Corda.* Col. iii. 1 - - - - - - - 174

Preached on Ascension Day in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 7th May, 1891

XX. Guidance. John iii. 24; 1 Thess. iv. 8 - - - - 182

Preached on Whitsunday in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 24th May, 1896

XXI. The Cloud of Witnesses. Heb. xii. 1, 2 - - - 190

Preached on All Saints' Day in S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1891

SERMON I.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.[1]

There is one body, and one Spirit.—EPH. iv. 4.

IN most, if not in all, of S. Paul's Epistles we can trace some one idea which was uppermost in his mind at the time of his writing it. It may have been one suggested to him by the particular position, or circumstance, or danger of the Church to which he was writing, or it may have been one which from other causes, unknown to us, was particularly impressed upon his mind at the time. It may have been, indeed, that He under Whose inspiration the Apostle wrote, and Who so ordered and directed the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists that the entire body of Christian doctrine is to be deduced from them, though no one of them was written for the purpose of teaching it, it may have been, I say, that He willed that each important truth should thus in its turn have special prominence given to it, and that by this means the true proportion of the faith should be preserved.

This Epistle which we call the Epistle to the Ephesians was written by S. Paul while he was a prisoner at Rome. The Epistle to the Colossians was written at the same time; and the most casual comparison of the two Epistles

[1] Preached before the University of Dublin as a Thesis for the Degree of D.D. Third Sunday after Easter, 1873.

will show the identity of sentiment which runs through the two. The Epistle to the Colossians seems indeed to have been partly called forth by the necessity of opposing false teachers who had already arisen in that Church, but there is nothing similar to that in the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is the outpouring of the soul of one who lived in close communion with God, nay, who had been caught up into Paradise, and who tried to give expression to the thoughts that burned within him. Nothing can surpass in sublimity some of the passages in this Epistle—passages which show us that however labour and suffering may have prematurely aged the Apostle's frame, the spirit which drew its strength from above was still unsubdued — and through all this sublime language one thought for the most part runs. It is this: the glory of the Christian Church, and the exalted position in which its members are placed by the Gospel. "That ye may know," he says (i. 18), "what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and made Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Or again (ii. 4), "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" and again (ii. 19), "Now

therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head corner stone."

In these and other passages which I might quote we may plainly see how much the idea of which I spoke was in the mind of the Apostle when he wrote this Epistle, and the same appears in a lesser degree in the Epistle to the Colossians. This idea—the idea of the glory of the Christian Church and of the source of its glory—the Apostle expresses briefly in the statement that the Church is the body of Christ. This is a statement which is altogether peculiar to S. Paul, and almost peculiar to these Epistles. In them we find it frequently repeated as:—"The Church which is His body" (Eph. i. 23). "For the edifying of the body of Christ" (iv. 12). "The head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together," etc. (iv. 15). "We are members of His body" (v. 30). "For His body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. i. 24). "He is the head of the body, the Church" (i. 18).

It is of this "body" that the text speaks—"There is one body". The immediate object of the text is not to assert the fact that the Church is the body of Christ, but to assert that that body is One. The Apostle does not even say that the body of which he is speaking *is* the body of Christ, but there can be no doubt that it is of that body that he here speaks. Before saying anything then with respect to the oneness of this body, I must say a few words with reference to the statement that the Church is the body of Christ. It is the more necessary to do this because among us this truth has been greatly lost sight of, perhaps not so much lost sight of as deliberately thrust into the background under the idea that there is

some great danger connected with the consideration of it. It has been thought that men cannot speak of the Church, or attach any importance to its existence, without in some undefined way denying or at least disregarding Christ. A moment's consideration would, it might have been thought, have been sufficient to show that however the doctrine of the Church may have been corrupted, and however the Church may have been put by some in place of Christ, yet that a rightful regard to the Church which is the body of Christ could never lead men away from Christ Who is its Head. And then it seems to have been forgotten that however persons may be silent upon or disregard the subject of the Church, Holy Scripture will not be silent; that the Gospels will still continue to tell us that our Lord when He was on earth declared His intention to build a Church; that the Acts of the Apostles will still testify to the fact that this intention was carried into effect, and that the letters of the Apostles, chiefly those of S. Paul, will still show that the existence of the Church was regarded by them not merely as a matter of fact, but as a fact of the deepest significance in the history of Christianity. For what is this Church of which the Apostle so often speaks? We profess our belief in it every time that we repeat the Apostles' or Nicene Creed, but how few who repeat the words have any definite idea of what they mean.

What then is the Church? It is sufficient for my purpose to say in the first instance that it is a society established by Christ when He was on earth and intended to contain within it all who believed on Him. The mode of admission into this society was to be by the Sacrament of Baptism, and for those who were admitted He appointed another Sacrament by participation in which their union

with Him would be cemented and kept up. I have said that our Lord instituted this society while on earth, but it can scarcely be said that He actually formed it. What He did do was to set apart certain persons who, after His Ascension, were to go forth into all the world proclaiming the establishment of His Kingdom—which was but another name for His Church—and inviting all men to enter into it. By the ministry of the persons thus sent the Christian society was to be established, and it was, as we may naturally suppose, to be perpetuated by the ministry of those who should succeed to their office. To the society thus to be established our Lord gave the name of Church. "On this rock," He said to S. Peter after his memorable confession of faith in Him, "I will build My Church." This was not the name, however, which our Lord ordinarily used to describe the society which He was about to establish. In general He spoke of it as a kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, *i.e.*, that kingdom the establishment of which the prophet Daniel had foretold, and the approach of which the Baptist had announced. Sometimes too He spoke of it under other names. It was, He told His disciples, a flock of which He is the Shepherd. It was a vine of which He is the stem. It was a building which He would found upon a rock. And we cannot, I think, read the Gospels attentively without perceiving that our Lord regarded the building of this Church, the establishment of this kingdom, not as a mere accident of Christianity, not as something which Christianity could equally well do with or without, but that He regarded it as of the very essence of His new religion, and as one of the principal things which He came to the world to accomplish.

Assuming then, as I think I may assume, the truth of

these two facts, first, that Christ founded a society upon earth, which He called His Church, or Kingdom, and second, that the establishment of this Church or Kingdom was an essential part of what has been called His "plan," we may ask—does Holy Scripture enable us to come to any conclusion as to the object which He had in view in founding this Church? Upon this subject two different views have been maintained.

According to some the Church is a mere outward society established by Christ for the sake of the mutual help and encouragement which the members afford to one another. According to others the Church, while it is all this (though rather as a consequence of its actual design than as the design itself), is something much more. It is a spiritual society instituted by Christ to be the recipient of His grace, a living body animated by a living spirit, a body which should derive its life and nourishment from Him, and the members of which should be united together in Him. There is yet another view which in a manner combines these two. According to it there are, in fact, two Churches, a visible Church and an invisible one. The infant who is brought to the font is by his baptism admitted into the visible Church, but not necessarily, and many would say, not ordinarily, into the invisible. Now, that there are in the Church of Christ false members as well as true ones cannot be doubted. Some of the limbs of His Mystical Body are no doubt unsound, some paralysed, some even mortified, but while Scripture plainly teaches us this, it nowhere speaks of this second Church which is called the Church invisible. Can there be any doubt as to which of these is the true view? Surely the Church is something more than a mere religious company. What was our Lord's prayer for His Church on the night

on which He was betrayed?—"That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be *one in Us*." We should probably have found it difficult to understand these words if we had not had the subsequent teaching of S. Paul.

It is from him that we learn, what our Lord had indirectly taught, that the Church is the body of Christ, that He is the Head of the body, and that Christians are the members—"members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones," that from Him "the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16), or, as he expresses it elsewhere, that from Him—the Head—"all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God". He also tells us in what way persons are made members of this body: "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13). We may, see then what was our Lord's object in instituting a Church.

The aim of Christianity was to restore man to that image of God in which he had been created, to re-establish the union between God and man which sin had severed. To effect this the Son of God took human nature, and in this way united the human and Divine natures in Himself. He then founded His Church and so incorporated it with Himself that it became His body, and being His body was thus united to His Godhead. This is, I think, plainly the idea which underlies this description of the Church. It is

often supposed that when the Apostle speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ he is merely using figurative language. But it is something much more than a figure. The Church is in very deed the Body of Christ, the *fulness* of Him that filleth all in all. It is, in fact, the continuation—if I may use the term—of the Incarnation. In it there is a continued manifestation to the world of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The actual human body which He took is now at the right hand of God, but his Mystical Body is still on earth. It is the same idea which underlies that other representation given in Scripture of the Church, according to which it is the Bride of Christ, and their union is set forth under the image of a marriage. The Scriptural idea of the marriage union is, we know, that contained in the words of Adam, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," and to this the Apostle evidently refers when he says, "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."

There are many questions connected with the body of Christ which, however important, it is impossible for me to discuss—questions connected with its outward constitution and polity and government. All these I must pass over and bring you back to the statement of the text—"There is one body". If you have at all grasped the idea involved in the statement that the Church is the body of Christ, you cannot fail to perceive that there is and can only be "one body". "Is Christ divided?" was the question put by S. Paul to that Church of which he had heard and partly believed that there were divisions among them—"Is Christ divided?" And if He be not and cannot be, how can there be divisions in His body? There is no doubt room for great diversity among the members of the body of Christ, just as in the human body; there are many members each

discharging its own proper office and made capable of discharging it by a constitution peculiar to itself—there is, I say, room for great diversity among the members of Christ's body—diversity of character and feeling and opinion, but these diversities cannot affect the oneness of the body. If the Church of the present day presented no greater differences than these, we might claim with confidence that it still realised the Apostolic theory, "There is one body".

But is it so? Let the divisions of Christendom answer the question—divisions which separate men not merely into different schools of thought and opinion, but into hostile and opposing parties which are so far from agreeing with the Apostle's description that if one member suffer all the members suffer with it, that they rather rejoice in each other's sufferings. Can we, in the face of these unhappy divisions, maintain that the Church of the present day realises the theory of the Apostle? I confess that I do not see how we can. It is still true no doubt that by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body. In that sense there is still but one body and one Spirit. The Church into which baptism admits us, into which the Holy Spirit baptises us, is the one body of Christ. Men speak, indeed, of persons being baptised into this or that communion, or this or that Church, but Christ's Sacrament knows of no such distinctions. All who are baptised are admitted into the body of Christ. Here at least the true ideal is realised, but when we go a single step beyond this we are lost in the labyrinth of sects and parties, and know not where to look for the one body which is animated by the one Spirit. It may be—let us hope it is—that the Apostle in my text and similar passages is not stating any necessary condition of the Church's existence but merely the ideal at which the

Church should aim. Let us hope—it seems the only hope we have left to cling to—that the Apostle did not mean to say that if the Church should lose its unity it would lose its title to be the body of Christ, but that he merely meant to say that this was the state of the Church as Christ had founded it, whatever might be the state to which man might bring it.

The picture drawn by the Apostle of the Church builded as a city that is at unity in itself must ever be a sad one to us—sad from the contrast which it presents between the ideal Church and the real one—but it is a picture on which we would do well to look often. There are questions of deep moment which it may well suggest to our thoughts. Have we prayed and laboured for peace, or have we been like those who when peace was spoken of only made themselves ready for the battle? When we have been called upon to contend for what we believe to be the truth of God, have we endeavoured to soften the bitterness of party strife, or have we by our rashness or interference made it more bitter still? Who can tell how much good might be done by the humblest among us who determined that with God's help he would labour in his own circle, or in his own parish, for the peace and unity of the Church?

This, dear brethren, is the practical lesson to which I would in conclusion desire to turn your thoughts. There is a unity for which we may strive even as regards those with whom external union seems for the present hopeless. "Endeavour," says the Apostle in the verse preceding the text, "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." There is "one Spirit" as well as "one Body," that Spirit of which it is said, "by this we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit that He hath given us". "By this we know that He abideth in us and we in Him, because He hath given

us of His Spirit." Among the fruits of that Spirit are love and peace. God grant that they may be found among us. By cherishing them we shall be doing all that probably lies in our power towards bringing back the Church to its primitive unity. It may be, indeed it can scarce be otherwise, that our eyes shall never see the Church in this world a quiet habitation, but let us look beyond the present scene. He who loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish, He will come at last to take to Himself the Bride whom He bought with His own Blood. Then shall be kept that glorious feast which shall celebrate the eternal union, and the Church of Christ, freed from the heresies which have beset her and the divisions which have marred her beauty, shall be brought unto the King with joy and gladness, and shall enter into the heavenly palace, and then shall be heard the song of triumph, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour unto Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready."

Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

SERMON II.

THE PERILS OF THE CHURCH.[1]

And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.—Acts xxviii. 5.

There are scenes in the life of our Lord and those of His Apostles which we instinctively feel were something more than mere events which happened eighteen centuries ago. We feel sure that they in some sense forecast the history of the Church. We expect to find them appearing again and again in the Church's history, repeating themselves as history so often does. Such an event is that voyage across the Lake of Galilee, in which our Lord was asleep in the hinder part of the ship during the storm that so terrified His disciples. Was there ever a time of trouble in the Church that the hearts of Christians did not turn to that scene and see it re-enacted? To their fears Jesus often seemed asleep as of old—to their faith He ever seemed to rebuke the waves and the raging of the tempest. And so in like manner in that voyage of S. Paul recorded in the Acts, though here the ship and its crew, saved for the Apostle's sake, given to him by his Master, is rather the emblem of the world saved for the sake of the Church which is in it, its days of suffering shortened for the sake of the elect. Look for a moment at the picture, so graphically depicted by S. Luke, of that voyage—the long days and nights in which neither sun

[1] Preached at Reopening Service, Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, 1878.

nor stars appeared—the fierce raging of the storm—the ship driving helplessly before the wind, the terror of the voyagers from whom all hope had fled, and amidst all the confusion and alarm one figure standing forth, calm and undismayed, now reproving those who did not hearken to his past advice, now encouraging them with the assurance of deliverance. He alone had gained by that "harm and loss"—gained the only thing which he cared to gain, the opportunity of bearing testimony to the God Whose he was and Whom he served. He knew what the issue of that voyage must be as regards himself, for long before he had set out upon it, it had been revealed to him by the Lord Christ Himself that he should bear witness to Him at Rome; and now whilst others were despairing of safety an angel had stood by him in the night and told him that God had given him the lives of all who sailed with him. How that promise was fulfilled I need not now remind you.

Let us pass on to the scene which followed, and with which the text is connected. When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat and fastened on his hand. The ignorant multitude stood around, at once assured that the man thus marked out for punishment must be a murderer pursued by a Divine Nemesis. He had escaped the one death, but a more terrible was in store for him. They waited for the inevitable result. They looked when he should have swollen or fallen down dead suddenly. They looked, however, in vain. The Apostle "shook the beast into the fire, and felt no harm". Faith again triumphed, and the new danger only made it more plain—to the Apostle above all—that he was under the protection of God. But if that truth was thus forcibly im-

pressed upon the Apostle's mind, if it sent him onward on his great mission to the centre of heathen power with renewed strength and confidence, there was surely another lesson which it must have taught him too. It must have taught him that for him there was no moment free from danger; no time in which he could lie down to sleep in security, and that in the very act of escaping from one peril he might expect suddenly to encounter another; that, in fact, the moments of greatest peril would often be those in which, after having escaped from the greatest form of trial, he should be disposed to regard himself as safe. I cannot stop to point out to you how this truth has been often illustrated in the history of the Church. How often in the past as she escaped from the lion of some great persecution, or it may be some great heresy, she has been met by the bear of some other danger. I must hurry on to our own times, for it is of them I wish to speak to you.

I need not prove to you that the Church of Ireland in that sudden revolution which broke the bonds that had for centuries united her to the State, and stripped her of the wealth with which the piety of our ancestors had endowed her, encountered a storm in which, had she been a more human institution, she would most probably have perished. To many, indeed, it seemed as if all hope that the Church should be saved was taken away, but those who had faith in our Master's promise knew that that could not be so as long as she was faithful to Him. They knew that no true branch of Christ's Church had ever perished from these external oppositions. They knew that the Church of Ireland was not dependent for its existence upon the accident of its Establishment, or upon the possession of wealth or earthly dignities; that it had existed, nay, had been more glorious, before it possessed

either, and would still last when it had lost them. Such men—and I speak to many such, both clergy and laity, men whose hearts never quailed amidst that storm, men, who though indignant at what they felt to be an injustice, did not abandon themselves to mere vain complaints and reproaches—such men, I say, believed that as long as the Faith was saved the Church had lost nothing which could not be more than restored to her, and were determined that, with the help of the Most High, the Church of Ireland should still continue to witness for Christ in this land, and, let me add, that there were others with them in that determination. Men to whom in those days of national irritation perhaps sufficient justice was not done—men who did not agree with the majority of us as regards either the justice or the expediency of the act of Disestablishment, but who honestly believed that it was for the benefit not only of the nation, but of the Church itself, that it should be Disestablished. It seemed at the time to many that such a conviction could scarcely be an honest one; but now that we have come to know what the Church has gained by her loss, now that many of us would not, if we could, bring the old state of things back again, we are all willing to work side by side with those whom we once almost regarded as enemies. And many of them—I wish I could say all—are willing to work side by side with us. Thus the Church has passed in safety through her great peril. The storm is over, the Ship of the Establishment has perished; the frantic efforts of men who were ready to throw almost everything overboard, if they only could save it, failed—and who can be sorry that they did fail? The Establishment was wrecked, but the living freight—the living Church—escaped safe to land. But our dangers did not end there, any more than did those of

the Apostle end with his escape from shipwreck. It could not be supposed that so violent a change as that caused by Disestablishment—and one which came so suddenly—should not have a disquieting influence upon Irish Churchmen. The mere fact of having passed through a common danger tended in itself to raise their minds to an unwonted degree of excitement. The new exertions which they were called upon to make on behalf of the Church, the entire removal of these restraints which the State had hitherto imposed upon her, and the sense of freedom consequent thereon, all had a natural tendency to create a kind of fervour which, if not altogether entitled to the name of religious, was so in a great degree. But there was the manifest danger that out of that very heat might come a viper whose poison might infect the Church. There are no doubt many dangers to which a Church under such circumstances is exposed, but the danger which most naturally comes from the snare referred to, the viper that is wont to creep out of the heat of new-born zeal, is that of party spirit. It would have been more than strange if the Church of Ireland had altogether escaped the danger.

When I speak of party spirit I desire very carefully to distinguish it from that genuine zeal for what we believe to be truth, which must mark every earnest Christian. They are feelings which can scarcely exist together in the same minds. The man whose great anxiety is for the success of his party must soon lose—if he ever possessed it—that pure love of truth for its own sake which ought to be the ruling principle of the Christian. It is of party spirit then, and not of that of which it tries to assume the appearance, that I am speaking. It came out of the heat—no doubt it did—and fastened upon the Irish Church. Our enemies, all that had evil will at our

Zion, predicted her destruction. She is, they said, a house divided against itself, and cannot stand. She is a body whose life-blood is poisoned; the deadly venom of party bitterness is passing through her veins, her end is but a matter of time. They looked when she should have fallen down dead suddenly. But they have looked for some time now, and the harm they expected and hoped for has not come, and, with the help of our God, never will come. We have not indeed escaped the influence of party spirit, but that influence has been not greater but less than we could have anticipated. It is true that discussions in the legislative body of the Church have often been noisy and angry, but those who have taken part in them know that it was but seldom, and only on the part of a few individuals, that they were marked by the bitterness which characterises party strife. Men on the one side and the other were anxious to obtain or retain the sanction of the Church for what they believed to be important doctrines or practices, but with most of them the struggle was one for truth, and not for mere victory. And what was true of the Synod was—though not, I think, to the same degree—true of the Church at large. There have been, no doubt, exceptions; but notwithstanding these, I do not think that any impartial person who compares the state of the Irish and English Churches at the present moment can come to any other conclusion than this — that party feeling and party strife exist amongst us in a much less degree than in the sister Church.

But the evil exists notwithstanding; and in its train there follows, as there always does, another evil, which is, indeed, but another development of it, but which is wanting in those properties which give to the other a

kind of apparent nobleness—that narrow spirit which regards an opponent not as one to be conquered by fair means, but as one to be crushed by the mere force of superior power. The viper of intolerance, whose poison has infected the Christian Church almost from its commencement, is swift to make an effort to fasten itself upon a Church in the position of the Church of Ireland. Are we to wonder if that viper too has come out of the heat of our newly awakened zeal? By no means. It would have been marvellous indeed if it had been otherwise. When power is suddenly placed in the hands of persons who have not been trained to the use of it, we must expect that they will at first manifest some want of toleration. It would be contrary to all experiences of human nature if it were otherwise. Yet, here again I will say that as far as the legislative body of the Church is concerned the tendency to intolerance has been less and not greater than might have been expected. How far the tolerant spirit of the legislative body pervades the Church at large, and more especially its Executive Bodies, it is perhaps too soon to judge. These are some of the perils which the Irish Church must now face. I have spoken of them because they are the dangers to which every Church in her position must be exposed. There are other dangers at the present time, but they do not particularly result from the altered circumstances of the Church. No one can doubt that. No one can read the statements made by English Bishops, or witness their almost vain efforts to check the progress of a movement which they have declared to be full of peril to the Church, without feeling that it is the duty of the Church of Ireland to guard herself against an evil which is to a very great extent eating into the life of the Church in England.

There may have been, and there has been, considerable difference of opinion as to the best means of preserving the Church here from the same evils; but no one ever doubted that some mode of defence ought to be adopted. This, however, is a danger to which, though very real in itself, the Irish Church is not much exposed, partly because extreme Ritualism is opposed to the habits of thought and feeling of the vast majority of Irish Churchmen, and partly because the Church is fully alive to the danger.

There is another danger to which the Church of Ireland is exposed, and all the more that it is not fully alive to it. The Church of Ireland is not in much danger from Ritualism, but it is in no small danger from that system commonly known as Plymouthism, which, while it is really substituting another Gospel for that which the Apostle taught, is yet by its profession of higher spirituality attracting some of the best and most earnest of our people. Brethren, there are some here to-day who have power in their several spheres to help the Church to shake off this viper ere its poison mingles with her blood. Do not think that it is in the General Synod alone that the battle is to be fought. It is in Diocesan Synods and Boards of Nominations, and Parish Vestries—aye and in the pulpits—that the enemy is most often met with. Some of you meet it there. Do not be afraid of it, and above all do not let yourselves be brought to admire it. Men may give it the names of virtues, they may call it zeal, or earnestness, or love of truth, but do not be deceived by such names. It is not and never can be a virtue. It is a creeping, venomous, poisonous viper. How many tell you that the necessities of the time require you to be intolerant, that the defences which the Church has raised in her canons and formularies are not sufficient, and that you are bound

to raise a rampart within them, and to regard as fellow-soldiers only those who are within the defences which you have raised! Arguments of this kind seem plausible. But it is easy to see that the system which they would establish must, if carried out, reduce the Church to the narrow proportions of a sect. There are no doubt limits to the toleration, but it is for the Church to decide what those limits shall be. It is not for individuals to make them narrower than the Church has made them.

We all feel, I am sure, that what the Church now most needs is peace; the peace that springs from the mutual toleration within the Church's limits of each other's opinions, and the absence of that party spirit which engenders strife. What is the lesson which this House of God in which we are now assembled impresses upon our minds? A cathedral is the emblem of the Church. It is the embodiment of the idea of the Church, as distinguished from the several congregations which go to make it up. Hence it is, that while parish churches naturally reflect the condition and, in some degree, the feelings—perhaps almost the opinions—of those for whom they have been built, the cathedral is not only grander in its proportions, and more majestic in its beauty, but also may differ from them in some other respects. The cathedral is catholic, not parochial; and, therefore, whatever the Church does not condemn may fairly find a place in it unless there are particular reasons against it. But I have no wish to enter into a controversy, except so far as to suggest considerations which ought, I think, to make for peace. I have said that this Cathedral, in common with every other cathedral, represents the catholicity and, therefore, the tolerant spirit of the Church. But more than this. Who can enter within its

walls and not feel the influence more powerful than that of words of its grandeur and beauty? Who can trace in the perfection of every minute detail the proofs of a loving earnestness of purpose that thought nothing too good for the King of Kings, and not feel that such an offering ought to be judged of in a spirit as large as that which inspired it? But let us look at it from another point of view. This Cathedral is, and we hope shall be for ages to come, the memorial of our great struggle, may I not say the trophy of our great victory. Its restoration was commenced in the first year of Disestablishment. It is finished just as we have brought to a close the work of reconstruction, by completing the revision of our formularies. Here, under its very shadow, much of the work of reconstruction has been carried on. The noise of the hammer and the trowel has often blended with the voices of those who were engaged in it. But now both works may be said to be finished, and all are called to rest. To rest, and, Oh! brethren, shall it not be to peace? Brethren, the storm of political opposition has done its worst. Yet we have all escaped safe to land. A noxious viper of internal dissension has crept forth and fastened upon the Church's hand. Shall we let it hang there? Oh! for one hour of the faith that shook it into the fire and felt no harm. Oh! for a voice to cry mightily to Him Who has said "I am with you always". Oh! for an ear to hear the whispered answer of His love, "Fear not little flock. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

SERMON III.

EDUCATION.[1]

I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.—Job xlii. 5, 6.

To understand these words fully we must have some knowledge of the history and character of Job. We must therefore glance at the contents of this book.

The Book of Job is a Hebrew poem. It is not written in the style of the historical books of the Bible, but is written in poetry. As regards the book itself there are a great many different opinions, some persons supposing it to be an actual narrative of facts, and some supposing it to be an allegory, either wholly imaginary or founded on the history of an individual. There is no necessity for me to enter upon the discussion of this point. All that is needful for us to know respecting it we do know. It is very plain that the book was written for the purpose of teaching certain lessons and enforcing certain truths, and whether this is done by relating the actual history of an individual, or by means of an allegory or parable, is of very little consequence, since in either case the book being an inspired book contains the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

[1] Preached in Aghinagh Church, Co. Cork. Sunday after Ascension Day, 1881.

To us the only matter of importance is to know that the lessons which the book teaches us are true ones, but in what way the Holy Spirit has seen fit to convey these lessons to us can in no way affect the lessons themselves. Our Lord sometimes communicated His instructions by a reference to actual facts which had taken place, and sometimes by means of stories or parables, but no one imagines that our Lord's teaching was less true because the parable was only an imaginary story which had no real existence in fact. For example, some persons think that the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus was a true story and some think that it was only a parable, but no one fancies that the truth of the lessons contained in it is in any way affected by the question of whether it is a true story or a mere parable. In like manner then as regards the book of Job. It is an inspired book in which the Holy Spirit has conveyed to us certain truths, but whether it is a true story or a mere parable is of little consequence. It may be thought that the fact of Job being mentioned in the prophecies of Ezekiel and in the Epistle of S. James proves that there must have been such a person as Job, but there is not much force in the argument. We often speak of the several characters in our Lord's parables as if they had been real persons though we know they were not. Still, however, I do not mean to say that there was no such person as Job. On the contrary, I think it is most likely that the poem is founded on the history of an individual, but I do not think that we are bound to believe that all the circumstances related in the poem actually took place in the way in which they are here related, any more than we are bound to believe that the conversation between the Rich Man and Abraham in our Lord's parable or story, whichever it be, actually took place.

The matter of importance to us is, as I have said, to know the lessons which the book is intended to teach. Let us consider what these lessons are. The name Job means "much persecuted". The book is a history of one who was much persecuted. Job is described to us as being a man that was perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil. From the name and the character of Job we should then naturally expect that the subject of the book would be the sufferings of the righteous, in what light these sufferings are to be viewed, and how they are to be borne, as well as the effect which they are calculated to produce upon those to whom they are sent.

In the first chapter Satan is represented as obtaining permission from God to try Job by depriving him of all that he possesses. Accordingly calamities the most dreadful follow one upon another, until Job falls down upon the ground childless and a beggar, but still able to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord". Satan then obtains further permission to assail Job himself, and he smites him with a sore disease, till Job sits down in the ashes so changed that his friends do not know him, but still retaining his integrity and saying, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

Before going further I may remark that in this part of the book of Job there is a lesson of great importance taught to us, namely this, that nothing can befall us save by God's permission, that no enemy, spiritual or temporal, can have any power at all against us except it be given him from on high, and that while they assail us to gratify their malicious feelings God makes use of their evil designs to further His purposes of mercy regarding us. In Job's case Satan's hostility was aroused by the fact that Job was a sincere

servant of God. His earnest piety excited Satan's hatred, and to gratify that hatred be sought for permission to do him, as he thought, grievous injury. God gave him up to Satan's power because He perceived that the sufferings through which he would have to pass would be the means of leading him to see the defects which still existed in his character, and that he would come out of the furnace of affliction more fitted for the enjoyment of that happiness which He desired to bestow upon him. Thus Satan, while he sought to gratify his own malice, was made the instrument of God's designs, and thus God gives to all of His people the assurance that all things shall work together for good to those that love Him, and that no weapon that is formed against them shall prosper.

Three friends of Job having heard of his afflictions came to mourn with him and to comfort him, and the greater part of the book is occupied with an account of the discussions which took place between Job and his three friends. For seven days and nights they sat beside him without uttering a word, and then Job (iii. 1), apparently provoked at their long silence, opened his mouth and cursed his day. We are at once struck with the change in his language. He had in his answer to his wife declared that he had no reason to complain of God's dealings with him, but now he seems utterly thankless for all the blessings which he had enjoyed and angry with God for not taking him out of his troubles.

What caused this change in his feelings we are not told. His friends each in turn reprove him for bringing charges against the justice of God, and to each of them Job replies in his own defence.

In their reasoning with Job the three friends start upon a wrong principle, and thus they fail altogether to give a

right explanation of the nature of God's dealings with Job, and in the end they are reproved by God for not having spoken of Him the thing that was right. Job himself also starts with a wrong principle of an opposite kind, but in the end he is led to perceive his error, and not only is he taught why God permitted him to suffer so much but his sufferings are made the means of correcting the one great defect which was in his character.

The wrong principle with which Job's friends started was this, that suffering is sent by God solely as a punishment for sin, and that therefore every one who is a great sufferer must be a great sinner. Job therefore must, in their opinion, be a very wicked man, however righteous he might appear. To think that God would have let him suffer so severely if he had not been such, was, they imagined, to believe Him to be an unjust God. Job, on the other hand, starts with the assertion that he was a righteous man, and argues from this that there was something strange and unaccountable, if not unjust, in God's dealings with him. Now it is true, though it is only a part of the truth, that suffering is the punishment of sin; but, when Job's friends argued from that principle they were ignorant of the fact that punishment is, in the case of the righteous, chastisement inflicted by a Father upon His children, inflicted not as vengeance but as correction, not to hurt but to profit, and therefore that the *amount* of suffering does not depend upon the amount of sin, but upon many other things besides. Job, on the other hand, when he maintained the uprightness of his conduct and the purity of his life, did not, we may suppose, go in any degree beyond the truth, but when he imagined that because he was righteous, therefore he ought not to be obliged to endure suffering he forgot that there must

needs be some fault in him however righteous he was, and that when God sent him affliction to correct these faults He was acting the part of a loving Father, and not that of an unjust judge.

If we inquire what the fault in Job was which required all this suffering to correct, the answer, I think, is self-righteousness. He was indeed a righteous man, but he laid too much stress upon his own righteousness, and he thought it much more complete than it really was. That this was his great fault appears from the beginning of the thirty-second chapter, where we read (verse 1) that these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu against Job because he justified himself rather than God. Elihu, who is here mentioned for the first time, then proceeded to address Job, showing him in the first place the folly of his self-righteous notions, and then setting forth the design which God has in chastening the righteous, namely, to prepare them for higher styles of happiness.

At the conclusion of Elihu's discourse God Himself answers Job out of the whirlwind, showing how everything in nature speaks of His greatness, and leaving Job to infer the folly of his imagining that he was more just than God. The effect produced by the revelation of God to Job, and we may suppose of the severe discipline through which he passed, is given in the words of the text. All Job's self-righteousness is brought down. He has learned to feel his own nothingness, learned how far he fell short of being as perfect as he imagined himself to be; and weighed down by a sense of his perverse rebellion against the merciful dealings of God's Providence he exclaimed, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now

mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes". Up to this Job had stood upon his own righteousness. He had not known that there were in him sins, of which this very self-righteousness was the chief, which not only deserved punishment more severe than that which he had endured, but which needed all this chastisement to correct, but now he has at length learned what all these afflictions were designed to teach him. As he stands in the presence of God and hears His voice fall upon his ears, he feels that he is nothing more than a poor guilty sinner, and he takes his place again in the dust, no longer to mourn over his afflictions, but as a humble penitent to weep for his long-hidden sins. And now, too, the mystery which had puzzled him is made clear. He sees the reason for all that he had suffered, and feels how unjustly he had accused God for sending him such afflictions. Was this knowledge dearly bought at the cost of so much suffering? Would God have been more merciful towards Job, if He had let him live on in his prosperity and self-righteousness, than He was when by bitter trial He taught him that he was a sinner? O surely not. It may have seemed to us, as we commenced the story, a hard thing that so good a man should have been given up by God to the power of Satan, but now we see that Satan was but the instrument for accomplishing God's purposes. As soon as these purposes were accomplished, Satan's power was at an end, and from the dust and ashes of his self-abasement Job arises not only a wiser and better, but a happier and more prosperous man than he had ever been before. Satan thought to tempt Job from his steadfastness and to make him a sinner, but he only taught him that he was a sinner, and thus made him more truly righteous.

Job tells us in the text that this great change was produced by his obtaining a nearer view of God than he had had before. He had often heard of God with the hearing of the ear, but, now he saw Him with his eyes. His former knowledge of God had been only like that which we obtain of any one by hearing the sound of his voice, his latter knowledge was like that which we obtain by seeing him. How had he obtained this nearer acquaintance with God? By the sufferings which he had endured. They were the whirlwind out of which God spoke to him, and by means of them God manifested Himself to him as He had never done before. "Unto the upright," says the Psalmist, "there ariseth light in the darkness." And so it was with Job. In the darkness of his temporal afflictions there arises the light of the knowledge of God. And what was the result of his having attained this light? It taught him to know himself, taught him that he was a sinner. He who had prided himself on his righteousness now abhors himself, he who had thought it unjust that he should suffer at all now repents in dust and ashes.

There are many most important lessons taught us in this history. Let us try to take with us one or two of them.

First then we learn this, that the more we know of God the more we shall feel our sinfulness. If we think highly of ourselves, if we do not really feel and know that we are sinners—I do not mean merely be willing to *say* that we are sinners, there is often very little value in such confessions, people are often ready to say they are sinners just because they do not believe it—but if we do not really *feel* ourselves to be sinners, it must be because we have only heard of God with the hearing of the ear, but have never really seen Him with the eye of faith.

Oh! if we once really felt ourselves in the presence of Him Who is all pure and all holy, how would all our self-righteous thoughts vanish in a moment and we abhor ourselves and repent in dust and ashes! There is very little of this self-abasement among us, brethren. Is it not so? How many of us are there who really feel their sinfulness as they ought? Alas! brethren, I fear there is not one. How then are we to obtain a fuller knowledge of our sinfulness? How are we to be made holy and humble, no longer trusting to our own righteousness, no longer filled with lofty notions of ourselves? By attaining to a deeper acquaintance with God. As long as we are satisfied with merely hearing of God, with merely knowing as much of Him as we can learn from others, so long we shall never really know that we are sinners. Until our souls make acquaintance with God we shall never be acquainted with ourselves.

But then comes the question, are we willing to attain to a knowledge of God in God's way? Are we willing, for example, to attain to it in the way in which Job did, namely, by suffering? It is in general by suffering that men are brought very near to God. When we read of those good men whose lives seem to have been spent in the atmosphere of Heaven, and who enjoyed close communion with God, we shall find that in general they were persons who had passed through very severe trials and who had been purified in the furnace of affliction. Are we willing to see God in this way? Are we willing to hear Him speak to us out of the whirlwind? God has never laid on us the very sore afflictions which He laid on Job, but He has sent us lesser ones. How have we received them? Have we not too often complained of them as though we did not deserve such punishments, or did

not need such chastisements? Have we not murmured at our sickness, or our poverty, or our losses, as though God ought not to have sent us such afflictions?

Oh! brethren, it is but too true. We would rather be Job abounding in the good things of this life, and proudly walking about in the robes of his own self-righteousness, than Job sick and poverty-stricken, abhorring himself and repenting in dust and ashes. We shrink from pain and suffering as though they were the great evils which we ought to endeavour in every way to avoid, and we forget the much sorer evil which that pain and suffering are sent to cure, and which by God's blessing they do cure in those who receive them aright.

Dear brethren! let it be our earnest constant prayer that God would make Himself more and more known to us, that He would enable us to understand more clearly the nature of His dealings with us, and feel more fully the blessedness of having in Him a Father who chastens and corrects us that we may not be delivered over unto death. And then as every day unfolds to us the mysteries of His Providence and the unbounded strength of His love, we shall learn more and more of our own sinfulness, till we are contented to take our lowly station beneath the Cross of our Redeemer, abhorring ourselves and repenting in dust and ashes, with the only wish of our hearts that we may follow in that blessed Redeemer's steps, however long and thorny the path may be, till through the grave and gate of death we pass to our joyful Resurrection.

SERMON IV.

HARMONY AND DISCORD.[1]

Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go in to them, and I will praise the Lord.—Ps. cxviii. 19.

REVEALED religion has never lost sight of the fact that man was made in the image of God, and, therefore, that every part of his nature is capable of glorifying Him and of being used in His service.

His nature has, it is true, been corrupted, but his fall has not destroyed his spiritual capacities. They still exist even when dormant, and are capable of being awakened to life and energy by the touch of the Holy Spirit of God. This applies to man's whole nature, physical, intellectual, emotional, æsthetic. We might have thought that a man's individual tastes are in no way connected with religion, and that what are now called æsthetics are no more religious or irreligious than mathematics, but this is surely not so. We read in the book of Exodus that when Moses was making the tabernacle, God selected a particular man and filled him with the Spirit of God, to give him skill in all manner of workmanship for the tabernacle, and that in every wise-hearted man, He put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the

[1] Preached at Choir Festival, Lurgan, 1883.

sanctuary. The "wise-hearted" were those whose natural tastes inclined them to the particular works which they were called on to execute, and the Spirit of God made use of their natural gifts for the accomplishment of the Divine purposes. Some persons seem to think that such a thing as this is not possible now, for that Christianity is too spiritual a religion to concern itself with anything material. But this is the reverse of the teaching of S. Paul. He taught that as God has bought us, we are bound to glorify Him in our bodies as well as in our spirits, and that the most ordinary actions of our lives may be made the means of glorifying Him—that whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do we ought to do all to His glory. And if this is true of such purely bodily acts as eating and drinking, how much more must it be true of acts which are of a more spiritual nature—of those gifts, moral, intellectual or æsthetic which were bestowed upon some and not on all.

In the first rank of this last class I may place musical taste and power. It is the one which is most closely connected with religious worship. The use of music in religious worship seems the result of a natural instinct. Almost every religion—true and false—makes use of it. The lowest forms of heathen idolatry adopt it in their religious worship, Christian sects which have sternly banished all ceremonial except the Sacraments from their worship have yet retained music. There is, I believe, but one body of professing Christians which does not make use of it, and it is one which also rejects the Christian Sacraments. When we look to the Jewish Church, we find that even before the temple was built, David incorporated a choir of no less than 4000, of whom 288 were trained musicians, to take part in the worship of God. David

himself was a skilled musician according to the knowledge of his time, and was apparently the inventor of several musical instruments. There is a strange prejudice in the minds of some persons against chanting the Psalms in public worship, but surely the persons who object to the practice must forget or must be ignorant of the fact that the Psalms were made to be sung and that there are attached to many of them—as may be seen in our Bible version—directions for their musical performance, the particular tunes to which they were to be sung being sometimes specified.

We learn from the New Testament that it was usual to sing "a hymn," *i.e.*, some of the Psalms, at the feast of the Passover; and we cannot forget that the singing of that "hymn" was the last act of our Lord in connection with Jewish worship. What that hymn was we know from other sources. The Jews called it the great Hallel or Hallelujah. It consisted of six Psalms, from the cxiiith to the cxviiith. The first two were sung at an early part of the celebration, the remaining four at the close of it. Thus the singing of the cxviiith Psalm was our Lord's last act of Jewish worship. Read the Psalm with that thought in your mind, and you cannot fail to be struck with the coincidence.

The Psalm was apparently written after the return from the Babylonish captivity either for the occasion of the laying of the foundation-stone of the Temple, or for the dedication of the Temple after its completion. The first part of the Psalm to the end of verse 18, is supposed to be sung by a procession of Priests and Levites approaching the sacred precincts, the succeeding part to the 27th verse, by those within them. Verse 28 is the answer of the advancing procession, and then both join in the well-

known refrain with which the Psalm had commenced, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever". But whatever may have been the origin of the Psalm, our interest in it is not limited to its connection with Jewish history. It is one of the Psalms with which we celebrate the Resurrection of our Blessed Redeemer. It was of Him the Holy Ghost spake, though the Psalmist may not have been aware of it. He it was Whose life as a continued progress towards His heavenly abode was typified by the priestly procession moving on towards the earthly temple. It was His trust and confidence in God that spoke in the words, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? . . . The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation." It was His hope in the final issue of His struggle with those who "thrust sore at Him that He might fall" which found utterance in the words: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord". He was the stone refused by the builders in which the Psalmist saw "the head stone of the corner". He was the blessed one who cometh in the name of the Lord who should be "blessed out of the house of the Lord". And finally it was He Who, when His warfare was ended, should stand at last, not at the gates of an earthly temple but at the portals of heaven itself, and cry, "Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go in to them, and I will praise the Lord". Thus the Psalm in every line of it speaks to us of Christ. His struggle, His victory, His exaltation, these are its themes.

But we have not exhausted the applications of the Psalm when we have thus reached its highest meaning. Although it is in the fullest sense a Messianic Psalm—should I not say just because it is one?—it has its many points of

contact with the Christian life and is brimful of lessons of instruction to us. Martin Luther said that this Psalm had helped him out of troubles which no man on earth could have helped him out of, and though we may not need its help in that way as much as he did, yet we may be sure that even the most quiet life may find in it that support which it at times may need.

I am not, however, going to consider the general teaching of the Psalm in its connection with the Christian life. My object in referring to it is merely to remind you, of what is too often forgotten, that the Psalms are not only in common with the rest of the Old Testament Scripture profitable for "instruction in righteousness," but that from the fact that the Psalmist—whether consciously or not is of no moment—so often speaks in the person of Christ, the Psalms have a special value for us Christians. I fear that this is too often forgotten. I fear that the Psalms are too often regarded merely as songs of praise to be read or sung, and that few persons dig down into the rich mines of spiritual treasure which are to be found beneath their surface. Now this danger of a careless use of the Psalms is one to which you who are members of Church choirs are especially exposed. You may think it strange that you should be peculiarly exposed to danger in consequence of your having undertaken a solemn office connected with the service of God, but the danger is one to which all who minister in holy things in any capacity are exposed. We who are in a higher sense the ministers of Christ know that danger well—the danger which arises from having to study Holy Scripture, in a manner professionally; not so much seeking in it for words and thoughts which speak to our own souls as for those which seem likely to be of benefit to the souls of others. You whose office it is to

lead the praises of the congregation, are, though in a lower sense, the ministers of Christ, and you may forget—nay, you *will* if you do not guard against it—that the Book of Psalms is not one merely to be printed and chanted but to be studied and meditated upon; and thus while you become more and more familiar with its words, you may grow more and more indifferent to their teaching, and while you help to excite the devotional feelings of others, you may become more insensible to devotional impressions yourselves.

I must now come back to the words which I have selected for consideration. What more fitting words could there be on our lips and in our hearts as we enter the House of God than these? "Open to me the gates of righteousness. I will go into them and will praise the Lord." The first part of the verse reminds us of what God's House is, the latter part of what our duty there is.

To the mind of the devout Jew the Temple was the abode of righteousness as being the dwelling-place of God. I do not say that we ought to regard our churches with altogether the same feelings as those with which a devout Jew regarded the Temple. The whole Christian Church is now the Temple in which God dwells, and for us to regard one of our churches with that feeling of awe with which the Jew looked upon that Temple in which there hung over the Mercy Seat the cloud of Divine Glory, would partake of the nature of superstitious dread rather than of Christian reverence. But this is not a danger against which there is much need to caution men in the present day. Our danger lies in the opposite direction. I am sure that every thoughtful person among you has felt the difficulty of preventing your familiarity with God's House from degenerating

into a lack of due respect for it, and this difficulty is increased when we are in the habit of using the church —as in many cases we must do—for choir practice. Here again the same danger arises which I spoke of before in connection with the Psalms, the danger of forming a habit of using sacred things without the devotional feelings which ought to accompany their use. This feeling of deep reverence for the House of God may seem to some of you a matter of small importance, but it is not, and of this you may be sure, that if there are any persons who more than others need to cherish it, it is you who are members of church choirs. You cannot afford to dispense with anything which helps to keep before your minds that the duty which you discharge is a sacred one. It is impossible for you to divest your minds of the feeling that you would like to win the praise of men. There is probably not one member of a choir here present who is not hoping to hear—as no doubt you will hear—that every one has been pleased, more than pleased, with the manner in which the musical parts of this day's service have been performed. I do not say that this feeling is a wrong one, or that it is inconsistent with the existence of purer motives, but there is no doubt of there being a very great danger that the feeling may degenerate into a mere craving for human approbation unsanctified by any desire to glorify God, and worship Him, or assist others to worship Him, in the beauty of holiness, so that you may come to look upon Church music as a mere performance, and to sing in God's House the songs of Zion, as you would sing in any other house the songs of human love or sorrow. It will be a help against the danger if you will always keep in mind that the Church is the House of God, and that

though we cannot banish from the minds of those who minister in it all earthly motives, yet that such motives should be altogether subordinate to the desire to promote the glory of God and the good of man.

But there was a further meaning in the words "the gates of righteousness". They referred not merely to the sanctity of the Temple itself, but also to the character of those who should engage in the Temple worship. This is plain from the verse which follows: "This gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter". And in this sense of the words as well as in the former there is surely a lesson for us. The Jewish law required external purity in all who engaged in the service of the Temple. But the Psalm which speaks of Christ and so anticipates the Gospel must demand something higher. The righteousness of which it speaks is more than mere freedom from legal impurity. The righteous who enter into the gate of the Lord are those who have been sanctified by the Spirit of God, and thus the Psalm speaks to us of the holiness which should mark all those who serve in God's House, and warns them that they who minister in holy things ought themselves to be holy.

And now a word as to the purpose for which those who approached and desired to enter the gates of righteousness had come to them. "I will go into them and I will praise the Lord." If the Psalm were written on either of the occasions which I have mentioned, we know what were the subjects of the people's thanksgivings. They had returned from the land of their captivity. They stood once more upon the land to which for so many years their longing eyes had turned—the land given by God to their fathers. No longer must they hang their harps upon the willows by the waters of Babylon, unable to sing the

songs of Zion in a strange and heathen land. Once more would they pay their vows in the courts of the Lord's House in the midst of Jerusalem. Once more would they enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. Open wide then the gates of righteousness that they may go into them and praise the Lord!

We need be at no loss to know for what we are called on to praise the Lord, or what should be the subject of our *Te Deum Laudamus*. We cannot express it better than in the familiar words, "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers". If we wish to form the highest conception of the lesson suggested to us by the words, "I will go into them and I will praise the Lord," we must consider them as the words of Him in Whom they found their highest realisation. I have already pointed out that in the prophetic meaning of the Psalm they are the words of Christ Himself as He passes into the heavens. What was it for which He desired to praise the eternal Father, as He ascended up on high leading captivity captive? Was it not for the victory which He had won? He entered Heaven as a Conqueror at the head of a long train of souls rescued from the enemy's hand, and as a Conqueror He cried, "Open Me the gates of righteousness, I will go into them and I will praise the Lord". Our songs of praise are the echo—the faint echo at best—of His. With His own right hand and with His holy arm He hath gotten Himself the victory, but we are still struggling—now victorious and now defeated—our praises checked and subdued, now by the coolness of our hearts, and now by the consciousness of our unworthiness. But yet is there not encouragement to us in the thought that the great Captain of our Salvation has already entered the heavenly

city at the head of the vast army that are ever moving after Him? For Him the gates of righteousness have been opened and He has gone into them with songs of praise. We still sing in feeble strains, the highest it may be to which we can attain, but surely our songs ought to be of victory too. A victory not won by human might or power, but by the Spirit of God, and yet a victory in which we are permitted to share, a victory over the enemies which in His strength we are enabled to conquer.

And shall we not one day join in the more glorious songs of the redeemed in Heaven? There they sing a new song, though it is of the old, old story. They sing of Him "Who was slain, and has redeemed us to God by His blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation". In this lower state of our being we can indeed but "practise" the music of the great celestial concert, and Oh! brethren, how imperfect is our practice at the best! Some can scarce read the notes of the heavenly music, and, if they try to sing at all, do but catch up the tune from others. Some are a little better prepared to take their parts, and seem to have caught from the angelic host some of the "sweet fragments of the songs above"; but how many failures mark the efforts of even the best. And what are those discordant notes that so often mar the harmony? *We* scarce notice them so familiar are they to our ears, the jarring notes of strife and discord, of "bitterness and wrath and clamour," but O how painfully sensitive to them are the ears of the angelic host, how harshly does the babel of earth's many and discordant voices grate upon their ears!

Shall this discord never cease? Never in this present state. Never until the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ. It

may be indeed—and we cling to a hope which the book of Revelation seems to hold out to us—that in that unseen state which lies between the present and the eternal future—between death and the resurrection—the redeemed attain to a still deeper knowledge of the celestial harmonies, and that there they rehearse in more perfect tune, and without any of the jarring discords of earth, the glorious oratorios of Heaven. If it be so, that is one further step in our preparation, a nearer approximation to the time when all creation, delivered from the bondage of corruption, shall join with the redeemed in the eternal song of praise. For that time we must wait in hope. When it comes the redeemed shall stand at length before the Gates of Heaven itself, and then they will take up the Redeemer's words of triumph, "Open to me the gates of righteousness. I will go into them and I will praise the Lord."

SERMON V.

FELLOW-WORKERS.[1]

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.—2 TIM. ii. 21.

THE object of the Association to which you belong is stated to be the promotion among its members of the faithful following of Christ, and for the attaining of this object the Association is directed to take such steps as may be approved of to encourage among them the diligent use of the means of grace, holy living, and perseverance in all such good works as they may undertake. In furtherance of this design, and as one of the steps referred to, I have been asked to address you this evening. I have undertaken to do so in the hope that the Holy Spirit will enable me to speak and you to hear words profitable for your instruction and edification.

I have selected for our consideration the passage which I have read to you because it contains a very complete description of a true Christian worker, both as he is in himself and as he is in relation to Him Whose fellow-worker he is permitted to be.

S. Paul had been speaking to Timothy of some persons who had no doubt been of note in the Church, but who

[1] Preached to Association of Church Workers. S. Paul's, Cork, 1886.

had erred from the truth and destroyed the faith of some of their fellow-Christians. The error was not a mere intellectual error, in the case of one of them at least, for in S. Paul's first Epistle to Timothy he is mentioned as one who had "put away a good conscience," and had in consequence "made shipwreck of his faith".

S. Paul seems to have thought that the question would suggest itself to Timothy: How is the existence of such persons in the Church to be accounted for? It was a question which probably puzzled some of the Christians of S. Paul's day as it has puzzled many since. Probably there were then, as there are now, some who thought that in Christ's Church, the Church which He sanctified with His blood, there cannot be any intermixture of evil, and that though evil men may appear to be members of it they are not so in reality. We know how our Lord had already decided this question, how He had compared the Kingdom of Heaven, that is His Church, to a net cast into the sea which gathered all of every kind—both good and bad—and how He taught that this state of things is to continue until the net is drawn in the end to the eternal shore. Whether S. Paul had ever heard of this parable or not we do not know, but he had no doubt as to the truth which it taught, and he expressed it, as our Lord had done, under a figure, though one different from His. "In a great house," he said, "there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour." There can be no difficulty as to the meaning of the figure. The great house is the Church of Christ. He is the Master of the house and the members of the Church are its furniture—vessels used by Him for the varied purposes of His House. But these vessels are of different kinds.

Some are made of precious metal, some of coarser and less valuable material, some are "to honour," some are "to dishonour". The figure will not bear to be pressed too far. If it is, it may be supposed to teach that the position of each in the Church is unalterably fixed from the time of his first admission into it, that as the gold can never become wood, and the earth can never become silver, so the vessels to honour and the vessels to dishonour must always retain their respective places. But the object of the Apostle was to show that the vessels to dishonour were so by their own act, that no one was necessitated to be such, and that the means of becoming vessels to honour was within the reach of all. He therefore added the words which I have read to you, in which he shows how, although as a matter of fact there always will be vessels to dishonour in Christ's House on earth, yet that there is no necessity in the case of any individual why he should be so, for that every one may, if he will, be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use. "If," said the Apostle, "a man purge himself from these" he will be so. Who are the "these"? Plainly the vessels to dishonour to which he had just referred. Is there nothing more required than that we should dissociate ourselves from ungodly persons, and if we do, shall we be vessels unto honour? The Apostle could not have meant to say that. Look at the life of Him who was in a higher sense than any other man "a vessel unto honour," who affirmed of Himself that He had come into the world to do the will of God, and in Whom God declared Himself to be well pleased. When it is asserted of Him that He was "separate from sinners," what did that separation imply? It did not mean that He kept aloof from all intercourse with sinners. "This

Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them" was the charge brought against Him, and He did not deny it. And yet though He thus lived in daily intercourse with them, He was truly "separate from sinners," separate from their sinful principles, separate from their sinful practices, ever indeed loving the sinner, but ever hating his sin. It is somewhat in the same way that we are to explain the words of the text. He who would be a vessel unto honour must purge himself from all association, not necessarily with the persons, though this too is often requisite, but with the principles and practices of the vessels to dishonour. And thus, no matter what he had been in the past—fit perhaps only for the lowest purposes of the world, but not fit for anything higher or more noble, not fit certainly for the Master's use, save as even a Judas is at times made the instrument of His will—no matter what he had been, he becomes a vessel of gold or silver, holding an honourable place in the Master's House and ready to be used for His purposes. S. Paul can scarcely have thought of this transformation of a dishonoured vessel into an honoured one without remembering how remarkably his own life illustrated his words. He had been a vessel to dishonour. Ignorantly and in unbelief he had served as the instrument of the baser passions of others, thinking indeed that he was doing God's service, but all the while persecuting Him Whom God had sent; he had become a vessel to honour, a chosen vessel as his Master called him, preaching the truth which once he destroyed, in nothing behind the very chiefest Apostles, yet labouring more abundantly than they all. In his case the earthen vessel had become a golden one. He had purged himself from the vessels to dishonour with whom he had been united, and had become a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet

for the Master's use. S. Paul spoke then out of personal experience. He would not probably have applied his words to himself. He would not have claimed to be a vessel of gold or silver, but we know that he was all that was represented under that figure, and that the words in which he explained it are, in fact, a true description of himself.

Who are vessels unto honour? Those who are sanctified, meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. I want to fix your minds upon this description. It is, as I have said, a most perfect description of a true Church worker. The standard which it lays down is a high one—of course it is. We do not expect to find low standards in the Bible. At least if we do we shall be disappointed, for we shall not find them there. God's standards are perfect. We can but aim at attaining to them here, but it is not here that we shall attain to them. "The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" is in this life ever beyond our reach.

But let us see what we are to aim at. First, the vessel unto honour is "sanctified". I need not dwell upon this term. It probably means here no more than dedicated to the service of God. The vessels in the Jewish Tabernacle were, we are told, "sanctified" by Moses, and it was probably in allusion to this that S. Paul speaks of the precious vessels of the House of God as having been "sanctified".

But then you must remember that underlying this there is the idea that whatever is dedicated to God's service should be pure and holy. This is true of every Christian, for every Christian has been dedicated to the service of God. But it is true in a higher sense of every one who undertakes to work for God. You who prize

the name of Church workers—and I hope that every member of the Association does prize it—you must ever bear in mind that the name carries with it the idea of a more than ordinary dedication of yourselves to God, and though that cannot be said to increase the obligation to follow after holiness which lies upon every Christian, yet it does increase the inconsistency of neglecting to do so. If of the whole Church of Christ and of its members it is declared "the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are," surely upon you lies a heavy responsibility to maintain that mark of the Church. If you who profess to work for Christ are not holy in your lives, what is to be expected from those who profess nothing more than to be mere workers for the world? Do not think that you can take the name of Church worker and treat it as though it were a mere name. If it is to any of you no more than a name it would be much better that you should resign it. To work for the Church is to work for Christ. Shall we, can we, work for Him with hands from which we have not even tried to wash the defilement of sin?

My dear brethren, fellow-workers in the Church of Christ, I fear that some of you do not always realise the fact that it is not for a mere human organisation that you are working, not for a parish, not for the pastor of a parish, not to please one or oblige another, but for Christ. There are many things, especially at this present time, which tend to divert the mind of the Church worker from the thought that he is working for Christ. There is so much Church work which partakes of a secular character, that workers often forget the end in the pursuit of the means, and the means are pursued for their own sake and not for the sake of Christ. For example, it is one of the misfortunes of our present position that we are often

forced to have recourse to secular means of raising money for Church purposes. I trust indeed that such expedients are merely temporary. I hope that the time will come, and that soon, when Church men and women will have so learned the duty and the pleasure of giving to Christ that they will give not only what they never miss, but what they do miss, without asking for anything in return. The evils arising from the present state of things are many, and one, and not the least, of them is this, that there is a confusion in the minds of many between work done for Christ and work done from some merely earthly motive, and the higher motive is often entirely lost in the lower. This is one of the dangers to which those of you who are in earnest in your wish to be Church workers are exposed.

You are asked perhaps to join in some effort to raise money for a Church purpose, and you consent because of a wish to work for Christ, but you soon find that the majority of those who are joined with you have no thought of Christ in the matter at all, and by degrees you too forget the high motive which had influenced you in the beginning, and the desire to please Christ gives place to the desire to please others or perhaps only yourself. How are you to guard against this temptation? It will, I think, be some help if you will remember the other characteristics of the "vessel unto honour," that are stated in the text; "meet for the Master's use," and "prepared unto every good work". The vessel is of gold or silver. It is intended for the use of the Master, and it is fit for the purpose for which He uses it. That then is your position if you are true workers for God. Am I fit for the Master's use? Surely we must sometimes ask ourselves that question if we are in earnest in our work.

How can it be possible that any sinful man is fit for His use? We know that He stoops to make use of men in accomplishing His Divine purposes, but how can they ever be *fit* for His use? In the highest sense—in the sense in which the angels are fit—they never can be in this life. But there is a certain fitness to which by His help we can attain. But how often do we prove unfit! how often do we fail to serve the use for which He intended us! Why does He not reject us? Why does He not cast us from Him as vessels in which is no pleasure? You know why. It is because He knows whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but dust. It is because He pities us, as a father does his little feeble child vainly striving to carry a burden which he is unable to bear. And so He bears with our weakness, bears with our idleness and sloth, and treats us as though we were really meet for His use, though He sees, what in the depths of our consciousness we feel, and cannot but feel, how great are our deficiencies.

But what are the uses for which the Master requires us? The words are partly explained by, and partly explain, those which follow, "prepared unto every good work".

The gold and silver vessels of the House of God are not for the mere ornament of His table—they are for use. The servants of the Heavenly King are not a mere idle retinue that follow in His train. They are earnest, faithful workers. They are prepared unto every good work, that is, every work for which the Master wills to use them. We must understand the words "every good work" with this limitation, because we cannot suppose the Apostle to mean that any one can be equally fitted for Christian works of every different kind. He is meet for the Master's use because the Master knows for what purposes he is

fitted, and will use him for those only; and he is prepared for every good work to which the Master calls him because he is ever ready to obey the Master's call, ever ready to say, "Here I am, send me," when the Master asks, "Whom shall we send, and who will go for us"? In this sense it is true that the earnest worker is prepared unto every good work, but in the sense that because he desires to work for God therefore he is fitted to undertake work of any kind, it is not true. Men have their special qualifications for different kinds of work for God just as they have for different occupations in the world, and although in the dearth of Christian workers it is often found necessary that persons should engage in works for which they have no special fitness, it is always better when possible that each should engage in the work for which he is fitted. "But how am I to know this?" you say. I could not give you any rules by which you could determine it, but I have no doubt that if any one greatly wishes to work for God in whatever way he can best serve Him, he will not fail to find out what work is best suited to him. Let him ask God to show him what He would have him to do, and in some way or other it will be made plain to him. Work often comes to the Christian worker in ways which leave little doubt upon his mind that it is the Master's will that he should do it. It will be better for him in such cases to follow what appears to be the leading of the Divine Providence. I do not say that he may never be mistaken, but if his error has sprung from a desire to do God's will he need not fear the result. The real danger is lest men should shrink from God's work because it is of a kind that is not pleasing to themselves. Men like to choose their work instead of allowing God to choose it for them. They like some

kinds of work, they dislike others. Often the work which they like is work for which they are ill-suited, and the work which they reject is the reverse. Sometimes they look down upon some kinds of Christian work as though they were beneath them. Why is this? Is it not because workers do not keep in mind that they are workers for God? Can any work of His be beneath such poor creatures as we are? Are we not too highly honoured by being allowed to do anything for Him? Look again at the life of Him who was the pattern to all Christian workers. Did He shrink from any work or grow weary of it, or think it unworthy of Him? See Him on the night before He was crucified, when the thought of coming suffering weighed heavily upon His heart. See Him girded with a towel, and washing one after another the feet of His disciples, in order that He might teach them the duty of humility. Can we look at that scene and turn away with scorn from any task, however lowly, which we have been invited to discharge for Him?

Let me turn to another danger which besets the Christian worker. He sometimes grows weary of his work. It is hard to go on working and to see so little fruit of his labour. His time and his toil have gone, he thinks, for nought. The poor whose condition he has tried to improve are in no wise better than before; or the children to whom he has tried to teach Divine truth are almost as ignorant as before; or the sinful whom he has tried to reclaim have gone on still in their wickedness, or in some way or other he has failed to accomplish his purpose. But is it for a purpose he is working or is it for Christ? Surely *His* life on earth did not appear to be a success. See Him as He declared the great purpose of His life, "I have come to seek and to save that which is lost." See

Him as He hangs upon the cross while they cry in mockery, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save". Was that life when measured by the standard of His own day a success or a failure? And did He ever grow weary of His work, or cease His labour until He was able to say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do"?

Or is it the worker's trial that he is associated in his work with some with whom he cannot always work in harmony, and is he tempted to throw up his work because he cannot have things ordered as he thinks best? O, brother or sister, are you working for yourself or for Christ? Have you joined in work with others to please yourself or to please Him? Look at His life again. How imperfect was the accord between Him and even the disciple whom He loved, the Son of Thunder who knew not what spirit he was of. How complete the discord between Him and the son of Perdition. And these were His fellow-labourers when He was on earth.

I cannot go through the various trials, and hindrances, and discouragements which beset the Christian worker's path, and by means of which the tempter tries to lure him from his work, but this I will say to you as regards them all, if you are ever tempted to abandon your work think of your Master, Christ. Think of Him as One for Whom you are working. Think of Him as One Who was Himself a worker for God, and Who has set you an example that you should follow His steps. Ask Him to save you from the foolish fears that alarm you, from the foolish weakness that discourages you. Ask Him to make you a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for His use, and prepared unto every good work. Pray daily for more and more of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Pray that He may in all things direct and rule your heart, that He

may enable you to perceive and know what things you ought to do, and may give you grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same. Be diligent in all the means of grace, more especially in that one which brings Christ nearest to you and you to Christ, and though your path may be beset with difficulties and your work with discouragements, you will always be able to look up to heaven and say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever."

SERMON VII.

IN OMNIBUS CARITAS.[1]

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.—1 Tim. iii. 14, 15, R.V.

In this passage S. Paul states the object of this letter to Timothy. I have read it to you as it is given in the Revised Version on account of a difference—and by no means an unimportant one—between it and the Authorised Version. The translators of the Authorised Version supposed that S. Paul wrote this epistle with the object of teaching Timothy the manner in which he himself should behave himself in the Church of God; the translators of the Revised Version suppose the words to apply to all Christians. The matter is merely one of opinion, as S. Paul's words are capable of either rendering, but I have selected that of the Revised Version, "That thou mayest know how *men* ought to behave themselves in the House of God".

How ought men to behave themselves in the House of God? What more important question could be proposed to any Christian congregation, and what multiplied importance does it assume when put to such a congregation

[1] Preached at opening service of the General Synod, S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1890.

as that which I now address? There are assembled here the Fathers of the Church in this land, those who have been called by God to be rulers over His House; these are those who have been called to the high office of the priesthood to minister to the people in things pertaining to God; and there are the chosen representatives of the laity, sent by them to speak in their name in the Council of the Church. They have assembled to take counsel together for this Church of Ireland, to strengthen its defences, to help it to guard the sacred deposit entrusted to it, the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Need I say that I shrink from the task which has been assigned to me, and that I have undertaken it only in obedience to one whom I am bound to obey, and in humble reliance upon the help of the Divine Spirit?

How are men to behave themselves in the House of God? S. Paul thought the question of such importance as to require a letter from him to answer it. But before we look for the answer which we ought to give to this question it is necessary that we should clearly understand the question itself. What is this House of God of which the text speaks? S. Paul answers: It is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. It is the House of God, God dwells in it, His children, His household, inhabit it. They are members of the family of God. S. Paul wished Timothy to know what men's conversation, *i.e.*, conduct, ought to be. He wished him to know it because he was an appointed teacher in the Church of God. Surely those of us who have been in like manner sent to be teachers of men, even though we do not fill the exalted position which he filled, are bound to regard ourselves as entrusted with the same duty—to teach men how they are to behave

themselves in the House, *i.e.* the Church of God. Such instruction must of course be based upon the assumption that those whom we teach are actually members of God's family, dwellers in His House. We are not sent to baptise men and women, to invite them into God's House, but to teach them how they ought to behave themselves in it. In another letter which S. Paul wrote to S. Timothy he describes the Church as a great house in which are vessels of various kinds, some to honour, and some to dishonour. But even the baser ones are still vessels of God, and there is nothing to prevent their being made "vessels unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use".

Of that great House this Church, for which we are to meet to-morrow to take counsel, is a part. A small part, 'tis true, a weak, a despised part it may be, but that need not discourage us. The Church of Ireland has ere now played a noble part in the history of Christianity, and may do so again, for God has often chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the things which are despised to bring to nought things that are.

Is this Church of Ireland over which you, Fathers in God, rule, which you, my brethren of the clergy and laity, have been chosen to represent, a true part of this great House of God, true to Him who has built it for His glory? Have we kept the faith which was once—and once for all—delivered to the Saints? If so, what have we to fear? We may have a hard struggle for very existence, we may find ourselves deserted by those on whose help we relied, and even assailed by those who ought to defend us, but what of all that? No one can deprive us of our portion in Christ. No one can shut us out of the great House of God if we be true to Him and to ourselves.

Who was the builder of this House of God? Our Lord answered the question. "On this rock," He said, "*I* will build My Church." Our Lord did not leave it to be determined even by His Apostles whether or not the Christian Church should be called into existence. We can scarcely doubt that if Christians in early times had been left to themselves they would have united into a society for the sake of the mutual help and encouragement which they should have thus afforded to one another; but Christ did not allow the existence of His Church to depend upon the mere will of men, or to be merely the result of men's hopes, or fears, or necessities. He Himself built it; He laid the foundation when He was on earth; He built upon that foundation when He ascended into heaven; He has been building upon it ever since, and will continue to build until the whole building fitly framed together has grown into an holy temple in the Lord. Of what is that building composed? S. Paul answers, "Ye also," ye Christians at Ephesus, and therefore ye Christians in every land, ye "are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit". S. Peter answers, "Ye also as lively, *i.e.*, living stones, are built up a spiritual house". A question may be raised as to whether in building this His house He uses any but truly living stones. I shall not discuss this question any further than to say that neither of the Apostles whose words I have quoted regarded all those to whom they addressed them as earnest and sincere Christian men, as is plain from the practical exhortations addressed to them; and that in other figurative representations of the Church, such as that used by our Lord of a net cast into the sea, there can be no doubt that the Church is represented as including within it all Christians "both bad and good". It is true that "the

foundation of God," which is another name for the Church of God, is described as having this seal: "The Lord knoweth them that are His," but this rather implies that there are those in the Church who are not truly His, and this is still more plain in the other seal of which the Apostle speaks: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity".

But there is another aspect of the Church of God to which the Apostle refers. It is the pillar and ground of the truth. An attempt has been made to escape from the obvious meaning of these words by connecting them with the next verse, reading the passage in this way, "The pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy great is the mystery of godliness"; but such a construction of the passage is, as is well said by Bishop Ellicott, both "illogical" and "hopelessly artificial". Setting aside this reading of the passage, let us look at the statement made by the Apostle, "The Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth". But before doing so it may be well to remind you that Holy Scripture speaks both of the Church and of individual Christians, not as they actually are, but as God intended them to be. The true ideal—the ideal in the Divine Mind—has never been reached by either. We must wait for a time yet to come for that perfection which seems to be spoken of as belonging to them here, but which is never realised here. Then the children of God shall attain to that holiness which seems to be described as theirs now; then Christ who loved the Church and gave Himself for it will present it to Himself without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish.

This applies to the statement in the text with regard to the office of the Church. It is the pillar and ground of

the truth. It was for this it was founded. But when we come to apply this abstract truth to the concrete Church of a particular age, how difficult—nay impossible—is the application.

But though the Church does not realise the Divine ideal, it is well that we should keep before our minds what that ideal is. The Church was intended by its Divine Master to be the pillar and ground of the truth. *The* truth, not truth in the abstract, but *the* Truth—the truth revealed in the Gospel, the faith once for all delivered to the Saints. Of that the Church was made the pillar, the support, and not only the pillar but the ground, the foundation on which it rests; not indeed the lowest foundation, for it is a foundation which itself rests upon another, "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord," and thus the truth rests upon a foundation which in turn rests on Him Who is *the* truth. The Church exists, that is, was instituted by Christ not only for the stability of the truth but to be the ground on which the truth should rest. Now there must be some sense in which these words are true. Take the lowest sense we will of them and yet they affirm that the Divine purpose was that the Church should be the great teacher of the truth, and should, in some way or other, presumably by its decisions, be the great support of the faith. Has it proved to be so? Alas! history answers, Only to some extent. If we ask why it has failed to fulfil its Divine mission, one answer is that the divisions of Christianity have silenced the voice of the Church. No one Christian communion can claim to be the Church of Christ. The Roman Church no doubt makes that claim, but both the Eastern and the Anglican Church refuse to recognise it, and even if they did the Roman Church herself has effectually silenced the voice

of the Church by substituting for it the voice of an individual man.

We can indeed look back to a time when the Church was one body, and then it proved itself to be the pillar and ground of the truth by setting forth that Creed which all subsequent ages have accepted.

But the question still remains, why, if Christ intended His Church to be the pillar and ground of the truth, He permitted it to fall into a condition in which it became incapable of fulfilling its mission, and to this we can only say that as the accomplishment of God's designs of mercy towards men is in many cases made to depend upon the actions of men themselves, and that to them is often given the power of hindering it, so it is also with the Church. The Church's position as the pillar and ground of the truth was, as I have said, the result of her position as herself resting upon Christ as her foundation. I think we may assume that had she never ceased to rest on Him, she would never have ceased to be the support of the truth; but to whatever extent she slipped from off the foundation on which she had rested, to the same extent she slipped from under the truth which rested on her. The truth still rested on Christ, but the intermediate foundation had to a great degree gone from under it.

Into this House of God, this Church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, we have by God's grace been admitted. Some, like Timothy, have been called to serve Christ as rulers in His Church, some minister as His priests, and some serve Him as members of His household discharging the several duties to which they have been called. We have come together to take counsel for that part of the universal Church in which our lot has been cast. It cannot indeed be said of any individ-

ual branch of the Church that it is the pillar and ground of the truth. On the great matters of the faith it has of course no right to decide anything at variance with the teaching of the undivided Church; but there are matters on which it is entitled to speak, and on which it has a right to expect obedience, not merely from the clergy, but from the laity. Let us take our own case. We believe that the Church to which we belong is the true representative of the Church Catholic in this land, the one to which all Irish Christians ought to yield obedience. In the decisions of the Synod of the Church the voice of the Church is heard. Every member of the Synod is no doubt justified in using his influence to frame that decision in accordance with what he believes to be right, but, when the decision has been made, his duty is to obey—assuming of course that the question is one on which a local branch of the Church has a right to decide, and that its decision is not contrary to the teaching of Holy Scripture. It is useless for any one to ask why he should be prevented from doing things which are permitted in other branches of the Anglican communion, or why he should be prevented from doing anything which he believes to be for the edification of his people, and which has perhaps been done in his Church for many years without complaint. To such questions there is but one answer. We believe that this Church, as a true branch of the Church of Christ, has authority in these matters. We believe that its voice is legitimately expressed in the decisions of the Synod. What is left then but that we should yield obedience, whatever may be our own opinions. And while I would press upon all the duty of obedience to the Church's commands, let me add this, that as long as that obedience is rendered, no one has a right to complain that any one has made full

use of whatever liberty is accorded. Those who insist on the disuse of whatever the Church has forbidden, must be ready to assent to the use of whatever the Church has permitted.

What was S. Paul's answer to the question, How shall men behave themselves in the House of God? What did he write in order that Timothy might know the answer to it? Some of the things which he wrote were connected with the high office which Timothy held, some with those of the other orders of the ministry, and some with persons of private position. I shall not discuss any of these. But there is one of a general character applicable to all. It occurs at the commencement of the Epistle (verse 5), "The end of the commandment is charity". That love which is the fulfilling of the Moral Law as given to the Jews is the aim of the Christian commandment. It is the foundation of the Christian character. Those only who have learned to love one another with a pure heart fervently know how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God. Before we can learn the great lesson of Christian conduct we must learn the lesson of Christian principle. Have we learned it? Whence all our disunion and divisions, if we have? Whence our party strife and bitterness? Why is it that we have not learned to be more patient with those whom we believe to be in error, more tolerant of what we believe to be their erroneous opinions, more ready to recognise the good that is in them and to take little note of their shortcomings?

There is a saying of one of old, familiar to many of you, which asserts that while in things essential there should always among Christians be unity, in things non-essential there should be liberty, and in all things charity. I plead for all three. I need say nothing of the first. All will

allow that there should be perfect agreement among Christians upon all essential points. But I plead for liberty, liberty for clergy and people, liberty for congregations which find edification in things which have not been specially ordered by the Church but yet have not been forbidden, and the same liberty for congregations which may prefer the smallest amount of ritual that is consistent with the observance of the laws of the Church. Surely the Church of Ireland is narrow enough in theory without making it more narrow in practice. And why should we wish to narrow it? Are we so rich in men pressing into the ministry that we can afford to drive from us all who will not consent to be confined within limits narrower than those of law? Are we so rich in devotional feeling that we can afford to deprive earnest hearts of what they find a help to their devotion? Have we not effectually protected ourselves against ritual excesses? Have we not guarded against any ritual which expresses doctrines condemned by the Church? What then are we afraid of, and why should the cry be raised, "the Church is in danger," because in an age in which the love of the beautiful is the prevailing sentiment, congregations are becoming dissatisfied with the cold, bald services which satisfied the first generation, and wish for something more in accordance with modern feeling? I plead then for liberty within the Church's laws, and I plead for it for this reason if there were no other, that it is the surest protection against excesses which if the cord is drawn too tight will be sure to come when *that* has proved unable to bear the strain upon it.

But before all I plead for charity—the bond of peace and of all virtues—the parent of both unity and liberty. He, our Master—the Church's head and the Church's

foundation—on that solemn night ere He gave to the world the great proof of His love, that love that passeth knowledge, He gave to His Apostles, and through them to all the members of His Church, the solemn commandment, "Love one another, as I have loved you". Here then is a pattern which we are to imitate, a model after which our love is to be formed; we are to love men as Christ loved them. Is it not sad to think how much men allow party disputes and imaginary insults to separate them one from another, and how much the bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking which the Apostle Paul condemned are to be found among Christian people, so that with truth the contemptuous travesty of the old saying may be cast in our teeth, "See how these Christians *hate* one another!"

O Saviour of the world, Who lovest all men with an unchanging love, pour into the hearts of Thy servants such love for one another that they may be indeed followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Thou didst love us, and give Thyself for us. For by this shall all men know that we are Thy disciples if we have love one for another.

SERMON VIII.

MORAL STRENGTH.[1]

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.—2 TIM. i. 7, 8.

THE words were addressed by S. Paul to Timothy, but the charge which he gave him and the reason assigned for it are applicable to all Christians. He charged him not to be ashamed to bear testimony for Christ, and he told him why he should not be ashamed, because God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

It is the duty of every Christian to bear testimony for Christ, and no Christian ought to be ashamed to bear it because God has not given to any of us the spirit of fear. I should explain to you that the word fear in this passage does not mean that kind of fear which we are desired to have towards God. *That* fear means reverence, but the fear spoken of in the text means cowardice, the fear which one man may have of another, that kind of fear which men are ashamed to own to, and which is regarded in a man as despicable and contemptible. There is one other explanation of the words of the text which I must make. Instead of the words "a sound mind," we should

[1] Preached to members of Guild of the Holy Standard. S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1890.

read "discipline" or "self-control". The passage will then read thus, God has not given, or rather did not give, us the spirit of cowardice, but of power and love and self-control. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.

God did not give us the spirit of cowardice. When Christ took us to be His soldiers He did not put into our hearts a cowardly spirit. Some men are foolish enough to believe that a religious man must be a poltroon. There never was a greater calumny. The religion of Christ never made a coward of any man. Why should a man be a coward because he loves God and believes that God loves him? Why should a man be less ready to face danger because he is not afraid to die? Why should a man shrink from battle because he has learned not to fear them who can kill the body only and afterwards have no more that they can do? No, do not believe any one who tells you that the grace of God ever made any man a coward. That was not the spirit which we received when God enrolled us in His army and sent us forth to fight manfully under the banner of Christ, that is not the spirit which He imparts to His soldiers. I do not say that no man can be a brave man who is not an earnest Christian man. Far from it. There are those who will march boldly into the very jaws of death, and whose firm nerve will never tremble, and who yet—alas! that it should be so—are men living without God in this world. But there are two kinds of courage which, for want of better names, I may call physical and moral courage. The one is the courage which enables a man to brave bodily danger, the other is the courage which makes a man ready to brave the ridicule of his associates and the sneers of his companions in defence of

what he believes to be true. The former of these is common enough. In all the vast armaments of Europe there are comparatively but a few, of whom it could be said that they lack that kind of courage. But what of the other courage? O strange phenomenon! Men are not afraid to face shot and shell, and they shrink into a corner to escape the gibes of some careless comrade whose opinion upon other matters they would perhaps regard as wholly worthless.

To develop and to strengthen this moral courage is one aim of this Guild of the Holy Standard. Its object is thus stated in the Manual of the Guild: "To promote religion in the Army by teaching obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ in His Church, and by showing that the fear of their comrades, which so often deters men who are religiously disposed from outward profession of their faith, is cowardice and unworthy of a soldier". Is that true? "Cowardice unworthy of a soldier." Are there not some of you who know and feel that it is true though you persist in weakly yielding to it? How has this cowardice stolen into the hearts of brave men? It is a base feeling; for our good feelings come from God and God did not give us the spirit of cowardice. On the contrary, He gave us many things calculated to counteract it—the spirit of power, and love, and self-control. Let us think of these for a moment.

First He gave us the spirit of power, that sense of power which a firm belief in the truth of our convictions ought always to give us. When those convictions are derived not from merely our own reasonings but from the teaching of God, then belief in them becomes that faith on which S. Paul laid such stress, that faith which is the great power of the Christian life. But that is

not the only sense in which God has given us the spirit of power. We are soldiers in the army of Christ. We are engaged in a deadly struggle. What is to be the result of it? Shall we be the conquerors or the conquered? Can we—weak and sinful as we are—hope to conquer? "We are," says the Apostle, "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Can we believe this? What soldier does not know that a victory has seldom if ever been won by an army that expected defeat. It was prayed for each of us at his baptism that he might have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph, against the devil, the world, and the flesh. Has that prayer been answered for us? If it has not, it is not, be sure, from any unwillingness on God's part to grant what was prayed for. If we have fought and been conquered it must have been our want of faith that deprived us of the victory. God would have given us the spirit of power proportionate to our need. The possession of that gift was secured to every Christian who really desired to possess it. That spirit of power is the conviction that victory will be ours if we fight manfully under the banner of Christ.

And then He has given us something more. He has given us the Spirit of Love. If the former refers to our contest with spiritual enemies this refers to our contest with our fellow men. It is too often they who try to make us ashamed of Christ. It is they who try to make cowards of us. Shall we conceal our own opinions from a wish not to differ from them? Shall we keep silent and abstain from giving a reason of the hope that is in us, through fear of their ridicule? No, for God has given us the spirit of love. We must think of them as well as ourselves. Have we no power of doing them good, no power of commending the holy religion which we profess

in common with them, and of which we feel the influence though they do not? Surely if we are animated by that love which "seeketh not her own" we will pay little heed to men's sneers or ridicule while we try to let the light with which God has shined in our hearts shine before others, in hope that they may be led to glorify our Father in heaven. Was it not for this that to the spirit of power He added the spirit of love. And then He gave us also the spirit of discipline, or self-control, for this too is needful for those who would do any work for God in the world. Impetuous zeal often does harm while it seeks to do good, and even love must be kept under control or its labour may be marred.

These are God's gifts to those who are fighting under the banner of Christ. They are the gifts which fit the Christian to be a good soldier of the Cross. Power to be exercised towards the enemies whom he would conquer, love towards the friends whom he would win, self-control towards himself—God has given us these, placed them at least within our reach so that we may secure them if we will.

With what object has He given them? S. Paul answered that question when he drew the conclusion contained in the text: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." It is the conclusion which I want to impress upon you. It is the conclusion which this Guild of the Holy Standard desires to impress upon every British soldier.

Do not be deterred by fear of your comrades from outward profession of your faith. Do not be ashamed of the Cross which is the banner under which you have been enrolled. What a base thing it is to receive favours privately from a friend, and never to say a word in his defence

when he is unjustly accused. Which of you would do it? And you are silent when your best friend—He who gave His life for you—is assailed, and you are ashamed to stand up for Him or confess that He is your friend, and surely this is cowardice unworthy of a soldier. I know that I am not asking an easy thing when I ask all of you who are religiously disposed to show publicly by becoming members of this Guild that you are not ashamed of the Cross of Christ. Those who are not religiously disposed will laugh at you and no one likes to be laughed at. You will have to obey the Rules of the Guild; and the Rules of the Service are, you think, sufficiently irksome without adding any others. Yes, I know all this. But is it not better to bear all this than to be a coward, better to suffer for Christ than to be ashamed of Christ? Have you ever thought of those words of His, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall come in His Glory". Why will He be *ashamed* of them? Why will He not merely be angry with them? He will be ashamed of them because they were His soldiers and had not been faithful to their standard—ashamed of them as your Colonel would be of you if you slunk away in the day of battle and refused to face the enemy—ashamed of them because they were cowards, though God had not given them the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and discipline.

Shall Christ be thus ashamed of any of you? Is He ashamed of any of you now? And there is another question. Are *you* ashamed of Him? Can it be that you were signed in your infancy with the sign of the Cross in token that you should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and that your lives have been spent in total forgetfulness of that solemn obligation.

O, brothers, soldiers of our gracious Queen, soldiers of One higher than she, I would that I could hope that the Holy Spirit of God had touched the heart of even one of you to-night, and that one at least should be added to the ranks of those who are striving to live a Christian life as members of the Guild of the Holy Standard. I would that I could hope that each of you would take with him as the motto of his life, "The Lord is my life and my salvation, whom then should I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom then should I be afraid?"

SERMON IX.

GROWTH IN SECRET.[1]

And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.—S. MARK iv. 26-28.

ANY one who pays attention to the service in which we are now taking part, must perceive that the object of the Church in directing its use is twofold. In the first place the service is intended to be the expression of our gratitude to the Great Giver of all good things. It is a Service of Thanksgiving for the blessings of harvest. In the next place it aims at leading our minds to reflect upon some of those higher truths which nature in its several phases is calculated to suggest. Nature, as we call it, is but the particular form under which God is now manifesting Himself to us. If there are other worlds inhabited by rational beings, Nature to them may be something quite different from what it is to us. Things which are natural here may be quite unnatural there, and things unnatural here may be natural there. But in every case Nature must be a revelation of God; and the great spiritual re-

[1] Preached at Harvest Thanksgiving Service, All Saints', Raheny, 1891.

alities which lie behind, and are visibly represented by, the operations of Nature are probably in all cases the same.

We are all familiar with the use which our Lord made of God's dealings with the lower members of the animal world to illustrate God's dealings with men. "Behold the fowls of the air: they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" And again of God's dealings in inanimate nature as also illustrating His dealings with men. "Consider," He says, "the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothe the grass of the field, will He not much more clothe you?" Why then should you ask so anxiously, "What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." This is one of the lessons which a Harvest Thanksgiving reminds us of. See, it says, the ample provision which our Father's love has made for the supply of man's wants. He promised long centuries ago that the seasons should always continue to follow one another in regular order, and that those who sow their fields in seed-time may wait in the full assurance that harvest will come at length. We thank Him to-day that the experience of this year has confirmed that of the many which have preceded it. We in common with the other creatures of His hand wait upon Him to give us our meat. He has given it and we have gathered it. He has opened His hand and we are filled with good. We thank God for His goodness to us, and while we do we are reminded that God's gifts are not intended merely for the selfish enjoyment of those to whom they are given, and that to our thanksgiving for

His bounty there should ever be added the prayer that we may use His gifts to His glory and the relief of those that are in need. No thankfulness can be genuine which does not find room for this prayer. The farmer may go out and look upon his fields whitening for the harvest, or may watch the reapers as they cut the ripened grain, and the words "thank God for His goodness" may come almost spontaneously to his lips, but if he is merely thinking of himself, of his own profit and his own gain, unmingled with any thought of God's glory or his fellow-creatures' needs, it is to be feared that his gratitude has not sunk very deep into his heart.

The parable before us is one of those in which our Lord makes use of the operations of Nature, and of man working in the sphere of Nature, to illustrate the operations of grace, and of God working in the Kingdom of Grace. The parable is, we must remember, one of a series which were spoken on the same occasion. S. Matthew has recorded several of them though he has not recorded this one. The first parable of the series, which was also the first of all our Lord's parables, was the parable of the Sower. Whether the second parable was the parable of the Tares, as given by S. Matthew, or the one before us we cannot determine. Nor is it of any importance that we should. The subject of both parables, as of all that followed them, is "the Kingdom of God," or, "the Kingdom of Heaven," in other words, Christ's Church here on earth. Each parable describes some one or more special feature in the Church or special circumstance in its history. It is a field in which the Heavenly Sower has sown good seed, but in which His enemy has sown tares which grow up mingled with the wheat. It is a grain of mustard seed, which though so small grows into a tree in whose branches

the birds make their nests. It is a little particle of leaven entirely hidden in the meal in which it was placed, yet which in the end leavened the whole. It is a net cast into the sea, which gathers fish of every kind and draws them to the shore to await the separation of the bad from the good. Each of them represents a separate truth, a separate fact in the history of the Church, and has for its object the statement of that truth or fact. The parable may incidentally set forth other truths, but each parable has one main central truth which it is its object to set forth.

What is the central truth in the parable before us? It is, I conceive, that contained in the 28th verse, "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself". It is indeed commonly supposed that the primary object of the parable was to set forth the inherent vitality of the seed, and the power of growth which it possesses independent of all human aid. The parable is commonly called the parable of the Seed growing unseen, and no doubt it does teach the truth which that title expresses. I do not think, however, that that was the truth which it was the primary object of the parable to teach. What that truth was, is, I believe, contained in the words, "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself". In any case that is a truth taught by the parable, and it is manifestly one of great importance. Let us briefly consider it.

The parable is one which is capable of, and was no doubt intended by, our Lord to have a twofold application —one to the general work of Christ in the world, and another to that work as carried on in an individual heart. These, however, run so much one into the other that it is not necessary to consider them separately. The parable plainly looks back to the first parable, that of the Sower.

That parable had emphasised the fact that the fruitfulness of the seed sown depends upon the nature of the soil in which it is sown. It instanced several kinds of ground in which if seed is sown it will not bring any fruit to perfection, and then spoke of "good ground" in which the seed brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold and some sixty and some thirty. The parable now before us further describes that good ground as having in itself a power of nourishing the seed sown in it during the various stages of its development—first the blade, then the ear; after that the full corn in the ear. Neither parable tells us how the ground became "good" or whence it obtained the power of bearing fruit of itself, and this question lies outside the sphere of the parable before us. But it affirms the fact. How are we to explain it? The ground is the human heart, not every human heart, for there are hearts which have lost, if they ever had it, that power, hearts which our Lord compares to the wayside, or the stony ground, or the ground overgrown with thorns. Not every human heart then, but such as He compares to good ground. Of it He says that it bears fruit of itself. Some one will say, Surely our Lord did not mean to say that any human heart would bear good fruit without any help of Divine grace. Most certainly not. What did He mean when He said of the natural earth that it bears fruit of itself? Did He mean that its productive power makes it independent of rain and sunshine? We know that such is not the case. No matter how good the soil may be, no ripened grain will be reaped from it unless the dew and rain nourish the growing plant and the sunshine ripens the swelling ear. It is only on the assumption that such helps will be given that we can say of the earth that it bears fruit of itself—and so in like manner of the human heart. We

must assume the aid of the Divine Spirit helping the growth of the heavenly seed. Without it no fruit can be brought to perfection. But while we keep this in mind, we must not overlook the other truth so plainly stated by our Lord. Let us look again at the parable. The sower cast his seed into the ground and then left it to itself. He did not trouble himself with any doubts as to whether or not it would grow. He went about his other occupations, and the seed sprung and grew up he knew not how.

There is a difficulty in applying these words in their literal sense to *the* Sower Who first went forth to sow the seed of the Gospel. But we need not trouble ourselves about the difficulty, we can see what the main truth is, applicable alike to the Church at large and to the individual heart. It is a truth which has been too much lost sight of. Both in our missionary and in our educational operations, we have, I fear, thought too little of the mere work of sowing, and too much of watching the growth of the seed. In missionary work we seem in modern times to have been afraid to cast the seed into the ground unless we were able to provide for the watering and caring of it. We establish our missionary stations in heathen lands and set up, or try to set up, an offshoot of the Anglican Church among, perhaps, Asiatic or African peoples with whose whole nature our institutions are entirely out of harmony, and thus, I fear, hinder the sowing of the seed in other places in our desire to watch over what has been sown. We do not in fact believe that the earth bears fruit of itself and are too eager to know how the seed grows. It was not thus that S. Paul acted. He went from place to place and from city to city proclaiming the glad tidings of the kingdom. He did not wait even to baptise the converts whom he made. Christ had not sent

him to baptise, but to preach the Gospel. Apollos might come after him and water, or he might not. *His* work was to plant. By and by he returned and ordained presbyters taken from among themselves, men with probably but little knowledge but with much zeal, men incapable of discussing the higher doctrines of Christianity, but in whose hearts the Divine seed had taken root and was growing. How unlike to this is our missionary system!

I have little time to speak of the application of our Lord's words to the subject of Christian education, the education of those who are young, whether in years or in the Faith. I will only say a few words of caution to parents and others who are engaged in the work. You may take as your guide the words of the Preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand," but do not be too anxious to ascertain what progress the seed is making. It will in most, perhaps in all, cases, grow all the better for being let alone.

Some very good, but very injudicious people, think it their duty to question every one as to this spiritual state, and think that because they themselves feel a pleasure in laying bare their hearts before others, every one who has any real religious conviction, must feel the same. In all probability every such exposure of the seed retards its growth. This is especially true of the young. Do not ask them, do not encourage them, I may say do not permit them, to speak of their religious feelings before strangers. If it is done to please themselves it will probably make them spiritually proud. If it is done to please you it will certainly make them hypocrites. Remember our Lord's words, "the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself". It needs, indeed, the rain and sunshine

of God's grace, but it does not need, and will seldom bear, the constant exposure of its seed by human hands.

But I must pass on to the last scene in this great spiritual drama. The seed has sprung and passed through the several stages of its growth. There has been first the blade, then the ear, and finally the full corn in the ear. And *then* when the fruit is ripe *immediately* he putteth in the sickle because the harvest is come. What is meant in the case of the Church at large by that ripening of the fruit by which the time of the coming of the harvest is determined we do not know. In our Burial Service we are taught to pray that God would shortly accomplish the number of His elect and hasten His Kingdom. In whatever way these words are to be explained, they evidently contain the same idea as that contained in the text. The completion of the number of the elect is the ripening of the Church. When that is accomplished the harvest is come. He Who sowed in the tears of His bitter Agony and Passion shall reap in joy. He that went on His way weeping and bearing good seed shall come again with joy and bring His sheaves with Him.

O the joy of that harvest—joy of the Angels who stand around the throne—joy of the Heavenly Bridegroom when He presents His bride, the Church which He loved and for which He gave Himself, holy and without blemish, and to be His for ever. Shall we share in this His joy? When the ransomed of the Lord shall come to the Heavenly Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, will the King say to us, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"?

But it is more easy to understand what is meant by this ripening of the fruit in the case of individuals. There, more especially in young persons, there is some-

times seen a rapid development of the spiritual life, a rapid ripening of the fruit of the spirit. A ripening which often suggests the thought that seldom proves erroneous, that such persons are not—as is often said of them—"long for this world". When the fruit is ripe, *immediately* He putteth in the sickle.

But what of those—the vast majority—in whom we cannot detect any such ripening process? Can we hope that when the Divine Sower puts in His sickle, many of them will be gathered into His garner? We almost begin to despair as we look upon the vast fields of Christian endeavour. Is this all that the Divine Reaper has to gather into His garner? Can it be that so much of His seed has failed? Has so much of it been caught away by the wicked one as soon as sown, or has it withered away because it lacked moisture, or been choked by cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and has there been so little "good ground" which could bring forth fruit of herself? It is here that the parable comes to our help. The divine seed springs and grows up man knows not how. The blade may grow into the ear, and that into the full corn in the ear, and yet others may be unconscious of its growth. For the seal of the Church bears this inscription—let us read it and be satisfied—"The Lord knoweth them that are His".

But if this thought inspires us with hope as regards others, it does not follow that we may apply it equally to ourselves. The seed grows unseen indeed, but is it therefore true that the heart in which it grows is ignorant of its growth? I do not want to speak positively on this subject. But if we are wholly unconscious of any spiritual or even moral progress, if even we who are advanced in life are conscious that we are to-day just what we were

ten or more years ago—no worse it may be, but no better —with no more love for God or our neighbour, no more hatred of sin, no more desire to become fit for heaven, is there not much reason to fear that the heavenly seed has been lying without any evidence of life in our hearts; and if there has been no blade, and no ear, what full corn can there be in that day when the command shall go forth, Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe?

SERMON X.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.[1]

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.—S. JOHN viii. 12.

THE word "again" connects this saying of our Lord with the one recorded in the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth verses of the preceding chapter: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

I need not enter into the controversy, familiar to many of you, with reference to the narrative in the beginning of this chapter. It is sufficient to say that there exists great diversity in ancient manuscripts with regard to it; some of them omitting it altogether, some placing it at the *end* of this Gospel of S. John, and some in the Gospel of S. Luke, and that there is an almost general consent among the best critics that the event recorded in it did not occur at this particular period of our Lord's ministry. If this be so there is no reason why we should not conclude that the words of our Lord contained in my text were spoken on the same day as those which I have read from the seventh chapter. What day that was we are told—"On

[1] Preached in S. Peter's, Dublin, Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity, 1897.

the last day, that great day of the feast". The feast was the Feast of Tabernacles, and we shall miss the significance of our Lord's words unless we bear that in mind. The Feast of Tabernacles was the great annual commemoration of the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness previous to their settlement in Canaan. It was more than 400 years since those wanderings had ceased and yet the Jews still continued, by divine command, to commemorate them. The Law had directed them to cut down branches of trees and make booths in which they were to live for seven days, to remind them of the tents in which for forty years their forefathers had dwelt; but the Jews had before our Lord's time added—whether by divine direction or not we cannot tell—some other ceremonies which were intended to keep more vividly before their minds some of the great mercies which their fathers had received from God during their sojourn in the wilderness. Those mercies are enumerated in the cvth Psalm. "He spread out a cloud to be a covering and fire to give light in the night season. At their desire, He brought quails, and He filled them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock of stone, and the waters flowed out, so that rivers ran in the dry places." Food, and water, and light to guide them—all supplied to them by miracle—these were the mercies which had followed them through their wanderings. Of the first of these there had been a continual memorial in the first temple, in the pot of manna which was laid up in the most Holy Place. But that had perished in the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians and there was no possibility of restoring it. The other two were commemorated by the Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles, though whether by divine command or not we do not

know. On each morning of the feast a procession, headed by a priest bearing a golden pitcher, descended from the Temple to the pool of Siloam. The pitcher was filled with water and borne back to the Temple, where the priest poured out the water at the foot of the brazen altar, while the people sang the words of the prophet Isaiah, "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation". In this manner they commemorated the mercy of Him Who had brought water out of the stony rock so that it gushed out like the rivers. Again on every evening during the feast they lit up in one of the courts of the temple two large golden candlesticks, the light from which, as the Rabbis tell us, was so strong that it lit up the whole city. Thus they commemorated the mercy of Him Who had led their forefathers "all the night through with a light of fire".

Our Lord seems to have wished to impress upon the Jews that all these gifts of God to their forefathers were typical of higher gifts which He had in store not for the people of Israel only but for the world at large. On a former occasion, as recorded in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of S. John, He had taught them that the manna which had fed their forefathers was a type of Himself, the bread of life. "Our fathers," they said to Him, "did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." "Verily, verily, I say unto you," He replied, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven, for the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world". "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead, this is the bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die." In these words He

had applied to Himself the symbol of the manna, and now at the Feast of Tabernacles He in a similar manner refers to the other two gifts of the sojourning in the wilderness, and asserts them to have been types of Him.

On the last day of the feast He stood where the people had lately witnessed the advance of the procession bearing the water from Siloam. We can imagine Him waiting until the ceremony had concluded and the shouts of the multitude and the noise of the music had ceased. And then He stood and cried, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink". As if He had said, You desire to keep up the remembrance of the water which God sent your fathers out of the stony rock, but I have something better to offer you than that, I am the fountain of living waters. I am the rock of which the other was the type. If any man thirst, if any man feels his spiritual needs, and feels that he has no means of satisfying them, feels his needs and his helplessness as they felt them who in the wilderness sought water and there was none, till their tongue failed for thirst, let him come to Me and he shall obtain that which his soul longs for, he shall drink of the living water, and the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life.

And then again, on the evening of the same day, as we may suppose, He stood near the spot on which were raised the two great candlesticks of which I have spoken, and He "spake again unto them saying, I am the light of the world, he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life".

We can have no difficulty in understanding what these words mean, as we know what suggested them. Here, too, as in the former case, our Lord looked back to the

history of Israel's wanderings, and found in them another type of Himself. To our Lord's mind this desert march of the ancient people was the figure of human life. In it was typified the human race in its advance from the bondage into which ignorance, and above all ignorance of God, had brought it, to the liberty which it shall obtain when it knows the truth, and the truth makes it free. Before the eye of the Incarnate Son of God the long procession lay outstretched. He saw men's vain attempts to advance amidst the encircling gloom. He saw how feeble were the lights by which they vainly strove to guide themselves, and as He thought of how God had once led His people all the night through with a light of fire, He stood and cried, "I am the light of the world!" Was this the mere empty boast of one who desired to exalt Himself? No one who has studied our Lord's character as set before us in the Gospels can imagine this. Whatever opinion men may entertain as regards His *being* the light of the world, no one can think that He said He was merely for the sake of exalting Himself. But surely the question whether His words have proved, or at least are proving, true or not, is one which we are to some extent in a position to answer. There is no difference of opinion as regards the picture of the human race which His words suggest. It is the very picture which those who believe in modern culture as a substitute for Christianity are ever drawing. The human race, they tell us, is on its march to perfection. It is slowly and painfully emerging from darkness and struggling into light. The world has made, and is making, great progress in everything which tends to the promotion of human happiness. It will by degrees learn how to counteract many of the present causes of human misery and suffering, and the human race, throw-

ing off the many things which now encumber it, will at last attain to perfection.

We are not concerned with any of these predictions of the future of the human race; but, as regards the progress which it has made we may inquire to what is that progress really due. What is the light which has guided the human race in its onward march? Is there, can there be, any doubt as to the answer to this question? Among what nations of the world do we find this progress? Surely it is among Christian nations. Why has Europe advanced in civilisation so far beyond Asia which was peopled much earlier? Is there any other answer than because Europe is Christian and Asia for the most part is not. Look at that great Eastern empire whose inhabitants outnumber the inhabitants of Europe, the Chinese Empire. It boasts of a civilisation which reaches back to a time before the call of Abraham, but what it was then, that to a great degree it is now. Why has it made little or no advance? Can any one believe that if it had embraced Christianity 1000 years ago it would be what it now is? And if this be so, if the nations which have embraced Christianity have progressed, while those which have not accepted it have gone back or stood still, does not the history of the world give us one plain proof of our Lord's assertion that He is the light of the world? To me indeed and to you, I trust, His words have a still higher meaning. They speak of a progress of the human race not merely in civilisation but in holiness, not merely in all that tends to the promotion of human happiness here, but in all that tends to fit man for a higher happiness in a world beyond this. But putting aside all this and supposing for the moment that holiness and heaven are but empty names, still I

maintain that it is plainly capable of proof, and that history has proved, that Christ and none but He was, and still is, the light of the world. It will be said, no one denies that the world owes a great deal to Jesus Christ as it does to other great men, but we do not claim for them that they are more than men, and why should you claim it for Him? I could not now enter into a full answer to this question, all I would say is this. Our Lord's words were either a mere boast, or a guess which has happened to prove true, or a prediction. No man, as I have said, who studies His character, can believe them to be the first. And the second is not one whit more probable. Why should the idea have suggested itself to the mind of a Galilean peasant that He was to be the light of the world? He was, as His whole life proved, meek and lowly of heart. Was He likely to indulge in dreams of His own greatness, or make guesses anticipating for Himself an exalted future? And if His words cannot be explained in any such ways as these what remains but that we should regard them as a prophetic utterance, made at a time when their fulfilment seemed all but impossible, by One before whose eyes the future history of the world lay spread out.

But I must pass on to another thought suggested by the text. I have said that the picture present to our Lord's mind of the human race advancing on an onward march from a state of bondage to one of liberty, closely resembles that which is drawn by those who would make modern culture a substitute for Christianity. But while the pictures so far agree as regards the progress of the *race*, there is a great difference between them as regards the position of the *individual*. In the latter the individual is entirely forgotten. If only the race advance, it makes

no matter what is the lot of the individual. Millions may be crushed beneath the wheels of the triumphal chariot, but of what account are millions as long as the procession moves on. The light which guides the great army may never shine upon the life of the individual, but what matters that as long as the race advances. How different a picture was before the mind of our Lord as He uttered the words of the text, "I am the light of the world, *he* that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life". It was not of the race alone that He thought. Each individual of that race was dear to Him. The light which He shed upon the human race was intended to shine upon the heart and to brighten the life of each individual. And it is this that brings His words so home to our hearts and makes us feel that we have an interest in them. It is a glorious thought no doubt that He, our brother in the flesh, though our Lord and God, is the light of the world, the true light of the human race. But there is another thought which is borne in upon the hearts of many and which brings with it peace, and happiness, and joy. "Jesus Christ—the Incarnate God, the meek and lowly Man of Sorrows—is the light of my life, and in His light I shall see light. My earthly lot may at times be dark, with little of this world's joy to brighten it; but there is a light upon my path which shines from the distant heaven, and I know that that light comes to me from Him who loved me and gave Himself for me." Who is able to say this? He tells us, "He that followeth Me". You know what those words mean. To follow Him is to take Him as our guide. "My sheep," He says, "hear My voice, and they follow Me, for I am the good Shepherd" Who goeth before His sheep in order that they may follow Him. To follow Him is to suffer

ourselves to be led by Him even as the children of Israel were led by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, to be willing to walk in His steps wherever they may lead us, ready to take up our cross and bear it after Him. To follow Him is to accept Him as our Teacher, to learn of Him, to submit our judgments to His, to lay all our knowledge at His feet and say, "I am ignorant, do Thou teach me". To follow Him is to submit our wills to His, to have no will but His, to be satisfied to be what He wills us to be, and to do what He wills us to do. "It is very hard," you say, "to do all this." Yes, no doubt it is. We can at best but follow Him afar off. And then a thousand things are ever drawing us aside—earthly cares it may be, or pleasure, or temptation of some kind or other. Even when in our hearts we desire to follow Him, we are ever turning aside from the right way, ever missing the marks of His footsteps, ever trying to make life more pleasant, as we think it, by throwing down the cross which He has told us we must take up if we would follow Him.

Yes, it is hard to follow Him. It needs prayer, and watchfulness, and self-denial, but then think of His promise, "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". Life is an enigma more or less to every thoughtful mind; dark clouds are ever crossing our path, clouds of doubt and perplexity to some, clouds of trial and adversity to others. What "kindly light" will lead us when our way is dark, and we are far from home? I know of none save that of which the text speaks. "I," said the Son of God, "am the light of the world." If you take Him as your guiding light, life with all its doubts, and perplexities, and cares, and sorrows will no longer be dark to you. You may not be

able to see far before you, but you will be able to see far enough; you may not be able to solve all, or any, of the mysteries of life, but the path of duty will be clear to you. You may not be able to disentangle the speculative difficulties of existence, but you will not "walk in darkness".

Nay, more, the light that you will have will be more than the mere light of knowledge, it will be "the light of life"; of life not in its mere earthly form, in which we regard it as temporary and perishing, but in that higher form in which it is everlasting.

There are two pictures drawn by the prophet Isaiah which so closely resemble those of which I have been speaking that I cannot conclude better than by reading them to you. The one is the picture of those who conscious of their inability to guide themselves look upwards for a light that shines from Heaven. The other that of those who, regarding human knowledge and experience as sufficient guides, are satisfied to trust their own future and that of the human race to their guidance. The prophet sets the two pictures side by side in the last two verses of chapter fifty. Here is one: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God". And the other follows: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow."

SERMON XI.

THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT OF NATIONS.[1]

The kingdom is the Lord's: and He is the governor among the nations. —Ps. xxii. 28.

SINCE we assembled here on last Sunday, it has pleased God to remove from his earthly throne the sovereign of one of the greatest empires of the world. The event was not unexpected, but men's minds are none the less disturbed with doubts and fears as to what may be its effect upon the destinies of the other nations of Europe. It has been said that he was the arbiter of the peace of Europe, and that it was he who kept in check those other nations whose mighty armaments were ever present incitements to war. If this is true, even in a modified degree, his death must naturally awaken in peaceful nations a dread of coming strife. We may hope and pray that his successor will prove as averse from war as he was, and use his influence for the preservation of peace; but more or less uncertainty hangs over the future, and no little anxiety fills the minds of those who look onward into it. It is not my intention to discuss the character or the acts of the late Emperor of Russia. We can probably so little realise the position of a man who has absolute power over more

[1] Preached after the death of Alexander III. of Russia, S. Patrick's Cathedral, Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity, 1894.

than 100 millions of human beings that we are scarcely in a position to form a true estimate of what he was. The civilised world has admired the patience with which he bore the sufferings of the closing days of his life, and the anxious solicitude for his country's welfare which was extinguished only by the hand of death. No doubt there are many lessons which such a life is calculated to teach, though it is perhaps too soon to discover them. But it is not of these that I wish to speak to you. I have spoken of the fear which some entertain lest the death of the late Czar should prepare the way for a European war. That fear is natural. It seems to us as we watch the progress of events that the course of this world is ordered by the governance of man, and that human will is the predominant factor in the history of the world. It is indeed the one that we see, but is it the only one? Is it the predominant one? It is not. "The kingdom is the Lord's and He is the governor among the nations." That is our security. There is a power stronger than the power of the human will—the power of Him to Whom the nations are but as a drop in a bucket and as the small dust of the balance. This was one of the great lessons which the prophets of the Old Testament laboured, though often so unsuccessfully, to impress upon the Jewish people.

To the mind of a pious Jew the world presented a most puzzling problem. If he could believe, as others believed, that each nation was subject to a different God, and that Jehovah, though He might be more powerful than any other God, was still only the God of Israel, if he could believe *that*, then he could without difficulty understand how it was that his nation alone acknowledged the sovereignty of Jehovah; but how could he reconcile the universal dominion of Jehovah with the fact that there was

but one small nation in the whole world which acknowledged Him to be its God?

But here the prophetical utterances of Psalmist and Prophet came to his aid. In the writings of the Prophets more especially, God announced the future of the several nations of the earth. Each in its turn came under the view of the prophetic eye, each in its turn became the subject of prophetic revelation, of each Jehovah claimed not only to know the future but to be the One by whose agency that future should be moulded. "The kingdom is the Lord's," this was the refrain of Psalm and Prophecy, for it was the great fact which Prophecy established. Had Prophecy confined itself to the history of the Jewish people, to predictions of its national triumphs or sufferings, it might have only tended to foster the notion that Jehovah was but the God of that one people, and that every other nation was in like manner under the rule of a God of its own. But Jehovah claimed for Himself universal sovereignty, and He proved His claim by showing that the future of each nation was within His knowledge and under the control of His will.

"Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like Me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." And you will observe that in this passage God claimed not merely a knowledge of the future, but the power to determine what the future should be. When He declared from ancient times the things that are not yet done, it was not as the heathen god whose oracle was believed to be able to foretell the future, but for whom there was not even claimed the power to order that future. When

He declared the future, He claimed to be declaring the counsel of His own will. He alone could foretell the future, because that future was in His power, and He could determine and order it as He saw fit. "Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth."

What does this ordering imply? Are its conditions satisfied by the assumption that when God created matter in the beginning He endowed it with certain properties, of which, by the operation of certain fixed laws, not only all the phenomena of Nature but all the facts of history are the necessary result? It may be possible—I will not say it is not—to reconcile this theory with the actual words of Holy Scripture, but I think every one who is at all familiar with Scripture must feel that it is quite at variance with its tone and spirit. I am sure that the vast number of real believers in Monotheism must feel that one of the greatest blessings which it confers upon man is that it gives him an inward conviction that he is not under the iron rule of mere Law but under the merciful rule of a Divine Providence, and in no part of Holy Scripture is this more plain than in the prophetic parts. When the prophet was sent to comfort those that mourned in Zion, under some oppressing affliction—the famine it might be, or the sword, or the pestilence—did he try to do it—and would his words have had any effect if he had —by telling them that all these things happened by the force of an immutable law, and were the results of the original properties of the particles of matter of which our world is composed, that there was no use in praying to God about them, but that if they would be patient they would by-and-by be removed by the operation of the same law?

No, most certainly not. He said to them, "Shall there

be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Am. iii. 6). He said to them, "Thus saith the Lord, I have withholden the rain from you . . . and I caused it to rain upon one city and caused it not to rain upon another city, one piece was rained upon and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. . . . I have smitten you with blasting and mildew. . . . I have sent among you the pestilence and your young men have I slain with the sword."

It was in language of this kind that he spoke to them, and then he urged them to turn to the Lord with all their hearts, and promised them that if they would He would deliver them from their distress and restore them to their former prosperity. What do such words mean if God has either not the power or not the will to interfere in the government of the world? What comfort could it have been to the pestilence-stricken people to be told that if they would repent, God would remove the pestilence, if all that was meant by that was that the moral effect of their repentance would be an improvement in civilisation, and that civilisation would bring greater attention to sanitary laws, and that thus pestilence would be averted. No—true as all that may be it was no part of the prophet's mission to teach truths of that kind. The truth to which he bore witness was a higher truth than that, "God ruleth in the kingdom of men," and every kingdom of men is but a unit in that great Kingdom in which the Lord of Heaven and earth reigns. God ruleth in His own great Kingdom of Nature, and does in it as seemeth good to Himself.

What is the great danger of the present day? It is not the growth of actual Atheism—though even that danger is not altogether absent—but it is that men are gradually drifting into a way of regarding the world, its govern-

ment, its future, altogether irrespective of God. They do not deny His existence, but they ignore it. They push the work of the Creator further and further back into the dimness of the past, and when they have lost sight of the Creator, they find little difficulty in hiding out all view of the Governor of the world. And the evil does not end there, for when men have thus thrust God's interference in the world wholly out of sight, and have substituted the rule of law for the rule of God, they begin to think that man is not a free agent, an opinion which naturally leads to the denial of human responsibility and therefore of all religion. But man's whole nature rebels against the idea. Use all the arguments you may to prove that man is not free, and yet I venture to say you will not convince one man out of 10,000 of the truth of your conclusion. Your arguments may appear perfectly irrefutable, but man's own conviction of his freedom is stronger than all argument. And yet though your arguments are not strong enough to overcome his conviction, they are strong enough to cause him much disquietude. Perhaps, after all, he will say to himself, the logic of facts is stronger that the logic of conviction, and that I ought to be governed by it rather than by the other. Men are thus placed in a position of hopeless antagonism between what they are told are facts of *external* nature, and the convictions of their own internal nature—the one apparently proving that man is not a free agent, the other as loudly asserting that he is. Can any one who believes in the existence of an all-good God suppose that He would have left man involved in such a hopeless struggle? Does God regard me as a free agent? Will He regard my character, my actions, my life, as the mere results of forces in the conduct and regulation of which I have had no share, or will He hold me responsible

for all that I have done? Surely God would not have left men without some answer to such a question as this. And thus the very efforts of men to shake off revelation and to enthrone the laws of Nature in its place, only force us back upon the necessity of a revelation to deliver us from the perplexities in which Nature leaves us. *That* revelation tells us that however the world, and above all man, may seem to be under the rule of mere law, they are really under the rule of God, and that this rule is exercised, not by binding men with a chain of necessity, but by leaving them in the possession of free will.

When the Psalmist affirmed that "the kingdom is the Lord's; and He is the governor among the nations," it was to God's sovereignty over nations rather than over individuals that he referred. The great nations of the world had rejected Him, but they were all under His sway though they knew it not.

And what was true then is true now. Men do not believe it. They think that the destinies of nations are determined by the magnitude of their armaments, or the wisdom of their rulers, or the energy of their peoples; and they seem altogether to forget that there is a power greater than that of the mightiest host, and a wisdom far surpassing that of the wisest statesmen, and that that power and wisdom are factors in the government of the world which must be reckoned with and must be taken into account. Can we explain the history of the world on the supposition that man has made it what it is and that God's footsteps are not to be seen in it? Can any serious student of the history of our own nation explain the mystery of England's power in the world upon any theory which refuses to take into account the operation of a higher and more powerful will than that of man?

You may talk of the energy of the Anglo-Saxon race, of their endurance, their enterprise, their physical or intellectual qualities, but after you have made allowance for them all—and remember that behind them still lies the question, Whence have they derived all these qualities?—after making allowance for them all, the power of England is still a mystery. We boast of it just as Nebuchadnezzar did: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty," and as we do there falls a voice from Heaven, enforced at times by some calamity which compels us to listen to it, "The Lord ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever He will." And if God rules why should we be afraid for the future? It may bring war, it may bring calamity, it may bring humiliation, but it can bring nothing save that which He wills, Whose is the kingdom and Who is the Governor among the nations, and His rule, while it is the rule of justice, is also the rule of love.

SERMON XII.

SATIETY.[1]

And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.—Ps. cvi. 15.

THE author of this Psalm is unknown. Looking at the forty-seventh verse we might have come to the conclusion that it was written during the captivity in Babylon, but on looking to the First Book of Chronicles we find that that verse with the one which follows form the conclusion of a Psalm which David delivered into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

The Psalm is one of those in which the Psalmist recalls events in the early history of Israel, but they are not recalled merely for the purpose of instruction as in the seventy-eighth Psalm, nor merely to form a festal song as in Psalm cv. The Psalm before us is penitential—a confession of Israel's sin—an acknowledgment of the justice of their punishment.

The passage which I have read to you refers to an occurrence which took place in the second year after their departure from Egypt. The people, wearied of the food which God sent to them day by day, cried, "Who shall give us flesh to eat?" They said, "Our soul is dried away,

[1] Preached before the University of Dublin. Fifth Sunday after Easter, 1895.

there is nothing at all beside this manna". They thought of the flesh-pots of Egypt and longed to partake of them again. They were within but a few days' march of the land flowing with milk and honey where all their wants would be supplied, but they had not patience to wait till God saw fit to lead them into it. "They forgat His works, they waited not for His counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness and tempted God in the desert," and then "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul".

"These things," said S. Paul, "were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted." And yet the things were not evil in themselves. They had craved for flesh before, immediately after leaving Egypt, and quails had come up and covered the ground. They had eaten and were filled, and God had not manifested His displeasure any further than by saying He had heard their murmurings. But now, when after more than a year's experience of His providential care, and almost within sight of the good land which He had promised to give them, they again murmured against Him, then the things for which they lusted became to them evil things, and while the meat was yet in their mouths the wrath of God came upon them. In the narrative in the Book of Numbers we read that God smote the people with a very great plague, but the Psalmist does not allude, at least directly, to this. He seems to have regarded their punishment as twofold. First that God gave them their request, and secondly that He sent leanness into their souls. "He gave them their request." Did they even suspect that this was a part of their punishment? No, we may be sure that they did not. "They stood up all that day and all that night and all the next

day, and they gathered the quails," and they thought that they had much meat laid up for many days, and no one thought that another would eat what he had gathered for himself. And yet it *was* in wrath that God gave them their request. To understand this we must remember that though the text speaks of their "request" it does not mean that it was something which they had humbly asked God to give them. No, they had merely murmured against Him for not giving it. God is never angry with men for asking for His gifts except when they are gifts which they know He is not willing to give them. We often no doubt ask for things which God knows to be bad for us, but He does not punish us for such asking by giving us what we have asked. Yet it was in this way that He punished the murmurers in the wilderness. And this was not an isolated case. There was one other notable example of His dealing with the people of Israel in the same way—they asked a king when God was their king. They did not ask it of Him, but they went to Samuel and said, Give us a king to judge us, and God desired him to hearken to the people's voice, for that they had rejected Him that He should not reign over them. And so He gave them the king for whom they had clamoured in spite of Samuel's warnings. And more than three centuries afterwards, when they had had sad experience of the truth of Samuel's warnings, and when one of the kingdoms, into which a king's folly had divided the nation, was tottering to its fall, a prophet of God brought again that long-forgotten sin to their minds: "Ye said, Give me a King and princes. I gave thee a King in mine anger".

And what of the second part of their punishment? He sent leanness into their soul. It is not very plain what

the Psalmist meant by these words. He had, we may suppose, in his mind those words of theirs in which they had complained that their "soul was dried away," in consequence of their having lost the good things of Egypt, and with nothing but manna to take their place. The words may, as some think, express some purely physical suffering, but I think it is more likely that they referred to the pain of an unsatisfied longing—partly physical, it may be, and partly mental—and if so, then the words of the Psalmist become more plain to us, "He sent leanness into their soul". The flesh for which they longed did not satisfy them when they obtained it. There was still a sense of want, still a consciousness of an unsatisfied longing —there was a "leanness" in their soul.

But my object in directing your attention to the words of the text is not merely to recall to your minds an incident in Israelitish history. The words have surely a wider scope. They tell a sad story indeed, written in the annals of God's ancient people, but they call up stories innumerable in the annals of those who have been called to fill their place—stories in the lives of men for whose example *their* story was written, but who have failed to profit by it, of men who have lusted after evil things as they also lusted, and to whose lives there may be appended the same legend, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." In this life God deals with us just as He did with Israel in their journey from the land of bondage to the land of promise. If He humbled them and proved them to know what was in their heart, so we may expect that He will do with us. And if we are like them, if we forget His works—all that He has done for the promotion of our happiness here, all that He has done to fit us for a higher state of being hereafter—if we

will not wait for His counsel, wait for a time when we shall no longer see His dealings darkly reflected to us in an imperfect mirror, but clear before us in the pure atmosphere of heaven, and if, instead of patiently bearing with the conditions of our pilgrim life, we murmur because we cannot have all our wishes gratified, and are dissatisfied with the restraints under which we may be placed, is it so unlikely as to be incredible that God may punish us as He did them by granting us the things upon which we have set our hearts? I know there are many who would not regard this as a punishment, but who, if they thought of God at all, would regard it as a mark of His favour, and as an evidence that their desires were lawful; but this is not the teaching of the narrative which we have been considering or of the Psalmist's comment upon it.

"He gave them their request," gave it to them in His wrath. Not as a mark of his favour but as a mark of His displeasure. How often are men dissatisfied with their position in life, and vexed because their efforts to change it have failed. They long for more power, or more wealth, or more ease, and complain of the inequality of the gifts of Providence because other men have more of these things than they have.

Perhaps they are obliged to labour for their daily support, and they long for idleness, or they are obliged to live on very simple fare, and they would like to fare sumptuously every day, so they murmur against God because He has not given them the things they long for. Perhaps some lucky (as they would call it) speculation opens to them a door to wealth, or some turn in the political wheel gives them the possession of power, and they thus obtain the objects of their desire. Then, though in their

murmurings against God's Providence they had regarded Him as responsible for their former condition, it is not likely that they will see His hand in the change which it has undergone. Other persons, however, who regard God as the Ruler of the lives of men, may be disposed to wonder that such murmurers should have, as they think, succeeded in life, while so many patient sufferers have failed. And yet, for aught they know, such a case may be but another illustration of the truth taught in the text.

Or take another example. There are those who set themselves upon the gratification of some sinful desire. They are met with difficulties and impediments, and they never reflect that these are the barriers which God in His mercy interposes between them and sin. They wince and fret at restraints which are put upon them by the laws of society or the scruples of others whom they wish to make partners in their sin. They long to get free from restraints and hindrances, and if they have what they would call the good fortune to escape them, and to attain to the gratification of their wishes, they exult in their success as though it were something over which they do well to be glad, and it never occurs to them that God is but giving them up to their own hearts' lusts and letting them follow their own imaginations, and that if He has allowed the hindrances which His love had interposed between them and their sin to be removed, it is because that in His anger He permits them to have what they desired.

And can we doubt that in all these cases the other part of the sentence follows, "He sent leanness into their soul". Does the gratification of sinful passions ever satisfy? I need not say anything of sensual passions, but take envy, or hatred, or malice. Is a man satisfied when he has

succeeded in rising above the object of his envy, or injuring the object of his malice? If he is not wholly lost to all good feeling, there will be in his mind a lurking fear that after all there was perhaps something that he might have done better than merely gratifying his passion, and the pleasure which he anticipated from its gratification will be marred, and leanness—the leanness of an unsatisfied desire—will enter into his soul. The same failure follows the gratification of that longing for wealth or power of which I have spoken, which makes men think of God merely as the One Who has denied them gifts which He has given to others, and which leads them to murmur, though not to pray, and to rejoice over success, though not to give Him thanks. "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." It is not always so indeed. There are many who attain to wealth and power of whom it is not true; but of how many is it true that the attainment of wealth, and the gratification of ambition, have not satisfied an ever-increasing longing for more, and that the happiness which they were expected to secure is ever marred by a leanness that enters into the soul.

There is another leanness, though I do not know that we can regard it as referred to in the text. I mean the moral and spiritual decline which often follows the too eager pursuit of earthly things. "They that desire to be rich," says the Apostle, "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." How must it be in this money-loving age with the many whose whole souls are filled with this fatal desire, and how terrible is the spiritual leanness of a soul from which the love of money has wholly driven out the love of God!

If you ask for the moral which is to be derived for our-

selves from the passage which I have been considering, I think the answer is plain. If the temptation to which the Israelites yielded, the temptation to murmur against God because life is not in all respects what we would wish it to be, has never assailed us, let us be thankful. If it does assail us, and we are disposed to yield to it, let us remember the sad history of some who murmured of old, and who seemed to have attained the object of their desire, but whose fate is written before us in words of solemn warning: "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."

SERMON XIII.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.[1]

Being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.—Acts i. 3.

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.—S. Matt. xxviii. 20.

No written record has come down to us of the discourses of our Lord referred to in the first of these passages. If they were ever committed to writing no trace of the record remains. No doubt if we had it it would decide some of the controversies which have disquieted the Church of Christ, but it has not been given to us. For the Apostles themselves it was sufficient that they had their Master's promise that the Holy Spirit would bring all that He had said to them to their remembrance. They had no need to keep a written record of His words. They had not to cry, as we so often have, "O that the Master were here to solve our doubts and show us what we ought to do," for the remembrance of His words arose unbidden in their minds whenever they needed to recall them. But still we ask, What of the Church in after times? What of the Church in this our own day? Have we no need to know anything of what He told the Apostles, of "the

[1] Preached at the Consecration of the Bishop of Killaloe (the Right Rev. Mervyn Archdall, D.D.), S. Fin Barr's Cathedral, Cork. Feast of the Purification, 1897.

things pertaining to the Kingdom of God"? No doubt we have. But are we left in entire ignorance of them?

Before I answer this question, let us look at the words "the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God". The Kingdom of God is that kingdom of which the King of Babylon saw the rise in the dream which was interpreted to him by the prophet Daniel. "In the days of those kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." That kingdom is the Church of Christ.

We are familiar with the phrase "the Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of Heaven" from the frequent references to it in our Lord's parables. He tells us of its origin as arising from the sowing of the Gospel seed: of its constitution as containing among its members a mixture of good men and bad: of its growth and progress through the world until finally the good has triumphed over the evil, and the leaven which had at first been hidden in the surrounding darkness and sinfulness of the world, should at last leaven the whole: and finally He brings us to the very gates of the Celestial Kingdom, and tells how ere the Church enters upon its state of eternal glory, the evil shall be separated from the good, the tares from the wheat, the worthless fish from the good ones, the men without wedding garments cast into the outer darkness, and the Blessed of His Father brought in to inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world.

All this He had taught them before, and we may, I think, assume that "the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" in the passage before us included other things of which He had not spoken previously. The very expression "speaking to them," not, of the Kingdom of God, but "of the things pertaining to (or "concerning" as

in R.V.) the Kingdom of God," seems to suggest that it was not so much of the general nature of the kingdom to which His parables had referred, that He spoke to them, as of other things connected with it which it became necessary for them to know now that they were about to become rulers under Him in the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is presented to us in two aspects in the New Testament. It is a visible Kingdom, "a city set upon a hill," but it is also a spiritual Kingdom—one not of this world. It is not, I think, too much to assume that our Lord spoke of it in both of these aspects.

First, as a *visible* kingdom, it must needs have positive institutions of some kind, for, as Bishop Butler says, "the visibility of the Church consists in them". As a *Kingdom* it must have laws and a form of government, for that a Kingdom should be established by Christ in the world and left without law or government is almost inconceivable. But no direct commands of His with reference to these things, except in the case of the two Sacraments, have come down to us; we must therefore infer that to the Apostles was given power and authority to organise His Church, and that what they ordained was to be regarded as having His sanction, so that in His own words "whatsoever they should bind on earth should be bound in heaven".

Here then is the answer to the question, "Why has the Church been left in ignorance of the teaching of Christ during the forty days between His Resurrection and His Ascension?" It has not been left in ignorance of it. We learn what our Lord said not merely from what the Apostles taught but from what they did.

Turn now to the passage which I have read to you from S. Matthew's Gospel. Our Lord is giving to His

Apostles their commission to make disciples of all nations and admit them by baptism into His Church. And He adds "teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded *you*". The words seem to refer not to our Lord's public teaching but to commandments given privately to the Apostles, and if so they must at least include those given to them during the great forty days. We cannot doubt that the Apostles obeyed this injunction of our Lord, though we do not find them appealing to His authority even in such an important matter as the election of an Apostle in the room of Judas. Was that act of theirs less binding upon the Church because to outward appearance it was done merely at the suggestion of S. Peter and without any reference to the authority of Christ? Certainly not. And the same applies to Ordinances of which there is reasonable proof that they existed at the time of the Apostles, and were sanctioned by them. But some persons are of opinion that nothing is binding upon the Christian Church except it is expressly commanded in Holy Scripture, and they apply this not merely to matters of faith, to which it does apply, but to matters of external order and discipline to which it does not. A direct command given by an inspired Apostle would, they think, be binding on the Church, but the strongest evidence that a practice existed in Apostolic times, without any reason for supposing that it was merely of a temporary nature, is regarded as leaving it optional with individuals and Christian communities whether or not they will adopt it.

But the universal Church for more than fifteen centuries, and the great body of the Church for all the centuries of its existence, has acted on a different principle, namely this, that any practice of the existence of which in

Apostolic times there is evidence, though perhaps not amounting to a complete proof, but of the introduction of which at any subsequent time there is no evidence whatever, may be assumed to have been instituted by the Apostles, and if by them then by the authority of Christ Himself. It is on this principle that the Church has maintained such things as Infant Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination by Imposition of Hands, and the three Orders of the Ministry. It is with this last only that I am now concerned. The question is one which is presented to you to-day in its most solemn aspect. You have come here to-day not merely to gaze at an ecclesiastical spectacle. You have come to take part in a solemn ceremony, to sanction by your presence, to aid by your prayers in the dedication to the highest Order in the Ministry of the Church of Christ of one who has been chosen for, and called to, the Office of Bishop. At such a time you are not likely to be disturbed by any doubts as to the authority upon which the Church claims the right, and maintains the duty, to consecrate men to this high Office.

The Church of which you are members asserts that "it is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scripture and Ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests and Deacons". But you will meet with persons who will tell you that it cannot be proved that the Office of Bishop was established by the Apostles as a permanent Order of the Ministry, and that Christ Himself is the one and only Bishop. Are there then any indications in Holy Scripture of the existence of the office in the time of the Apostles? Or is there any evidence to show that it was introduced into the Church at a subsequent period? The Church relies upon Holy Scripture to

prove the one and on Ancient Authors to negative the other. Very early in the history of the Church, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, the Church at Jerusalem was presided over by one individual. Was it by S. Peter or S. John, both of whom were resident in Jerusalem, that this office was held? No. It was by James, not the brother of John, nor probably the other Apostle of that name; in any case one of whom nothing is recorded in the Gospels. Why did he hold it? Why did he preside at the Council assembled at Jerusalem to consider whether Gentile converts must keep the Jewish Ceremonial Law? Why was his decision in that case regarded as final? Why did S. Paul in describing in his Epistle to the Galatians a visit which he made to Jerusalem place the name of James before those of S. Peter and S. John? The answer to these questions is plainly this, that James was placed by the Apostles at the head of the Church of Jerusalem, that he was made, as we would say, its Bishop.

I do not found any argument on the fact that the title "Bishop" is used by S. Paul; for there can be no doubt that in his time the term was applied to persons who were merely Presbyters. But the name is of no importance if we have proof of the existence of the office itself, and that is abundant in S. Paul's Epistles to Timothy, to whom he entrusted the charge of the Church at Ephesus, and in his Epistle to Titus, whom he left at Crete to set in order the things that were wanting and ordain elders in every city. So much we may learn from the testimony of Holy Scripture, and when we turn from it to the writings of Ancient Authors, beginning with S. Ignatius the disciple of S. John, we find there abundant evidence of the existence of Episcopacy at a very early age, at least in

some Churches, and of its gradual establishment through the whole Church. We cannot then err in arriving at the conclusion that Episcopacy was an Apostolic institution not generally needed during the lifetime of the Apostles, but intended to be brought into full operation when they had passed away.

I have said enough, I trust, to show you that the solemn Service, in which we are about to join, is not an empty ceremony adopted to support a mere human theory of Church government, but that in solemnly consecrating a servant of God to the Work and Ministry of a Bishop the Church is justified in believing that she is fulfilling the will of her Divine Master. That there are communities of Christians who, while retaining all the essentials of the Christian faith, have yet rejected Episcopacy is a fact which we can only regret, but on the consequences of which we are not called to pass judgment. God uses even corrupt forms of Christianity as means for the salvation of souls. And what is true of corrupt forms must be still more true of defective forms. And after all, are we so infallibly certain that no error has crept into our own ecclesiastical system that we can assume the right to pass sentence on those who differ from us? No, let us be satisfied with the conviction that the Anglican Communion, of which we form a part, approaches more nearly than any others to the Apostolic model. But let us remember that other Christian communities have the same conviction with respect to themselves, and remembering that, let us "be not high-minded but fear".

But it was not, we may be sure, of the external organisation merely of the visible Church that our Lord spoke to the Apostles. Unto them, as He had told them, it was given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of

Heaven, and these stretched above and beyond all in it that was merely external. In the Church on earth, as in the world, the things that are seen are temporal, they exist for the sake of the things that are unseen and eternal. We cannot imagine that when the King, just as He was about to enter upon His glory, spoke to His Apostles of His Kingdom, He spoke merely of its outward aspect as presented to the world or its outward system as visible in the Church. Can we doubt that He led their thoughts to other—I will not say higher—conceptions of His Church than are conveyed by the idea of a Visible Kingdom?

There is another title given to the Church which represents a different aspect of it. The Church is said to be "the body of Christ". The Son of God took human nature that He might make Himself the head of the human race, that He might be to humanity all that the first Adam might have been had he not sinned. All and much more, for Adam was but made in the image of God, and He was God Himself. The headship of Adam could at best but have made man the partaker of an unsullied human nature, the headship of Christ makes him partaker of the Divine Nature. The Church is His Body. We have not only the Apostles' authority for that, but we have Christ's. The two Sacraments which He instituted testify to that truth. In Baptism we are made members of that Body of Christ. "By one Spirit," says S. Paul, "are we all baptised into one body." In the Holy Communion, He feeds the faithful with the spiritual food of His own most precious Body and Blood, and thus assures us that we are very members incorporate in His mystical body.

Surely when He spoke to them of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, He must have spoken of that mystery

which S. Paul calls "great," the mystery of that union between Christ and His people by which they become members of His body, and He is "the head from which all the body . . . having nourishment ministered, and knit together increaseth with the increase of God". And in this idea of the union between Christ and His Church, there is plainly involved that idea so prominent now in minds of earnest Christian men, the idea of the unity of the Church. We know how earnestly He prayed for it. Can we doubt that He spoke of it to His Apostles when He was speaking to them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God? And yet His sad eyes, as they looked forward into the future, saw His Church rent and torn asunder by false doctrine and heresy and schism until the very idea of unity was almost lost, and men seemed to think that every one was free to follow his own way, and form his own religion, and that the most to which Christian men could attain was to agree to differ.

He saw it all. Oh! that He would give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions, that He would take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord, that as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so all Christians might become of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity!

I have tried to give you some idea of what we may suppose were some of "the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" of which our Lord spoke to His Apostles. The subject has close connection with the Service in which we are about to engage, for whether we regard Christ's Church as His Kingdom, or as His Body, whether

we regard the purity of its doctrine, or the sanctity of its members, whether we are anxious about its government or are animated by a strong desire for the restoration of its unity, in every case our hopes must rest largely upon its Rulers. Bishops may no doubt be false to their trust as well as others, but as a general rule the spirituality, the faithfulness, the power for good of a Church depend greatly upon the Bishops who preside over it.

It is this which gives importance to to-day's ceremony. Another Bishop is about to be added to the Church of this land. Of him I need not speak to you, you know what he has been to you, how faithfully he has served the Church in this Diocese in the several offices which he has filled, and you see him go from you, with deep regret on your own account, it is true, but yet with a thankful assurance that another portion of the Church will profit by your loss. And if fears should rise within you at the thought that the duties which he has so long discharged must now be committed to comparatively inexperienced hands, you may have faith enough to banish them from your minds, for God who is removing His servant from this part of His Vineyard to another, will, you know, not forsake you, and the work of His Church here will continue to prosper in the hands to which He may commit it.

And may I not give a like assurance to you, my brother, now about to become a Father in the Church of Christ. The thought of new and untried duties, I doubt not, oppresses you, conscious of the solemn responsibilities which you are undertaking and of your own weakness, and fill you with alarm. "What if after all I should fail," you think; "what if I should prove unworthy of the trust committed to me? What if I should not faithfully serve in this office to the glory of God's Divine name, and the edifying and

well-governing of His Church?" Brother, be not afraid; your help standeth in the Name of the Lord, He will gird you with strength for the work to which He has called you. You cannot hope indeed to avoid troubles, you cannot expect that you will escape disappointments; but of what moment are these as long as you live and work in the consciousness that you are giving all that is best in your life to God? What are these as long as you live in the faith and hope that you will one day hear the joyful words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"?

SERMON XIV.

THANKFULNESS.[1]

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father (or as in R.V., unto God even the Father) in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—EPH. v. 20.

DID S. Paul really intend to give this as a precept to the Christians at Ephesus? Did he regard it as a precept which they would or could obey? He had been warning them against the gross vices to which the inhabitants of Ephesus were notoriously addicted. He had told them to have no fellowship with their unfruitful works of darkness—things done by them in secret of which it is a shame even to speak, and he had plainly implied that the Christians to whom he wrote were in danger of falling into such sins. Can we believe that he could have cherished any hope that they would obey the precept in the text?

We might indeed very naturally ask this. And yet the fact is patent that he did give the precept. Why did he give it to the Ephesians if it were to be of no use in the regulation of their lives? "Am I then," you say, "bound to obey it in its strict letter? Bound to thank God for everything that happens to me of whatever

[1] Preached in S. Patrick's Cathedral, Twentieth Sunday after Trinity, 1898.

nature it may be, to thank Him for sickness as well as for health—for adversity as well as prosperity—for the loss of those most dear to me, as well as for the happiness which I had in their life? I cannot do this." Well, I am sure you cannot, and I am sure that S. Paul did not expect that the Ephesians could. But God does not accommodate His precepts to our weakness, although in judging of our obedience to them "He knoweth whereof we are made and remembereth that we are but dust". The pattern which God sets before us for our imitation is the pattern of His own perfect holiness, manifested in the life of His Incarnate Son. Be ye holy, He says, for I am holy. But He knows that in this life we can never attain to that at which He bids us aim; and again He knows too that it is not by bringing our standard down to the level of our capabilities that we shall attain to the level, and that our aims should ever be higher than the highest point which we can hope to reach here. So we can understand why the Apostle said, "Give thanks always for all things". To do this is to be our aim. We shall not reach it here, but we shall climb higher, because we have aimed so much higher than we can climb.

I do not then want to discourage you from making the effort to obey perfectly the Apostle's precept. On the contrary, I want you to see that the extent to which you can attain to it is probably a good deal beyond what you imagine. But before I say anything on this point there is one caution I wish to give. Some persons may think that when S. Paul tells us to give thanks for all things his precept is founded on the assumption that we ought to regard all the dealings of God's Providence with the same feelings. But this would be a great mistake. It is

not the design of the Gospel of Christ to blunt our human feelings and emotions and make us alike indifferent to the joys and sorrows of life. Some persons will tell you that there is nothing in the world, that ought to cost the child of God a sigh, or draw from his eyes a tear, but do not believe them. It is a very different lesson that we are taught by the example of Him Who shed tears, as He looked on the guilty city fast ripening for destruction, and wept at the grave of Lazarus. No. Be sure of this, the Gospel of Christ has no sympathy with any system which maintains that men ought to be insensible to their own sorrows and therefore of necessity callous to those of others. To whatever extent the old Stoic philosophy may have prepared the minds of the Greeks and Romans for the reception of Christianity, it was not by teaching indifference to all earthly things that it had this effect. "We glory in tribulations," says the Apostle, "knowing that tribulation worketh patience." This was the aspect of his mind towards those troubles of life of which he had such large experience. The Comforter who stands beside the Christian mourner does not say, Dry your tears, for there is nothing that is worth weeping for, but He says, Let your tears flow on, your Father does not forbid your sorrow; but He bids you remember that it is He who has made sorrow your portion, and He bids you to look onward to the time when this world shall have passed away, and in a brighter world He will wipe off all tears, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

But this after all does not lead us further than to the cultivation of a spirit of resignation to the Divine will. Ought not that to be enough? Why should we be asked to go further and to be actually thankful for sorrow and suffering which we find it so hard to bear? I think S.

Paul meant to suggest the answer to this when he said, "Giving thanks . . . to God, even the Father." Giving thanks to God for events in our lives implies that God rules and orders our lives. We do not thank one person for something which another person has done for us. The precept, Give thanks to God for all things, would be a strange one if God were not the disposer of all things. But that fact alone does not account for the precept. God might be the Ruler, and yet we might not be bound to give Him thanks for all things, for we might believe, as many heathen nations have believed of their gods, that He designed to do us evil. We must then know something of the feelings of God towards us, before we can know whether or not we are called upon to thank Him for all things. The Apostle gives us the knowledge that we want. The God Whom he bids us thank is our Father. He is the great Ruler of the world, the Ruler of our lives, but His rule is not that of a mere despot but that of a Father. Why then should we shrink from giving Him thanks for all things? As God He is all-powerful, as Father He is all-loving. How can a union of perfect power and perfect love fail to work for the good of men? If absolute power was wanting we should be afraid He might be unable to effect the designs of His love; if perfect love was wanting, we could have no assurance that His power might not sometimes work for our harm. But now that we know that in Him they are both united, we need not have anything to fear from His power, and may have everything to hope from His love. But it is so hard to give thanks always for all things. It is an easy thing to join in the General Thanksgiving in the public service, an easy thing to thank God for creation, preservation and redemption. These things we know come from Him.

But it is not so easy as regards all things. There are, for example, troubles that come upon some which are the results of the evil actions of wicked men. It is hard to believe that such troubles form any part of the working of the Divine Providence, and harder still to thank Him for them. And yet, it is impossible for us to form any adequate notion of God's government of the world if we exclude from our consideration the power which He exercises in overruling the evil that is in the world to the accomplishment of His own designs of mercy.

It is true that evil is merely permitted by Him and not ordained, but yet the direction of the results of that evil is as much a part of His government as any other part of it. We cannot forget what a prominent part the sin of wicked men took in that sacrifice by which the world was redeemed—the sin of the men who clamoured for the Saviour's death—the sin of Judas who betrayed Him—the sin of Pilate who condemned him. We loathe the sin which brought about the redemption of the world, but yet we thank God that by that sin His purposes of love were accomplished. This is a case no doubt in which we can see clearly that God did permit human sin to bear a part in the accomplishment of His purposes. We cannot see this in many cases, but may we not believe that He Who alone can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men will bring good out of evil, and that the time will come when we shall see what abundant reason there was, though we did not know it, for thanking God for permitting things which though evil in themselves had proved fruitful sources of blessing?

I have been speaking as though S. Paul meant to affirm that for every event in our life, no matter how distressing, for every sickness, for every sorrow, for every false ac-

cusation, we ought to give thanks to God ; but perhaps all he meant was that under all circumstances we should cherish a thankful spirit, always trusting to God to bring good even where the prospect appears to be one of coming evil. And yet even in this sense, how few of us are there who can say that they give thanks always in all things? When trouble seems far off we think how bravely we should bear it if it came, how strong would be our trust in God, and how ready we should be to thank Him for His fatherly chastisement. But let the trouble come and how different is the result often! Some wonder why God has thus afflicted them. Is His mercy clean gone for ever, they ask, and is His promise come utterly to an end for evermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious and will He shut up His loving kindness in displeasure?

Instead of cherishing a thankful heart they think they have a right to complain of God's dealings with them, as though they were productive of unmixed evil out of which they cannot expect any good to come. Oh! how different this is from the spirit which breathes in the text, the spirit which should actuate every Christian's heart, "giving thanks always for all things"! Have you attained to this? No, certainly you have not, at least if we give to the words their full meaning. But are you trying to attain to it? This surely you can do, and this is all that God expects of you. There are cases in which it seems almost impossible to do this, in which yet we may learn to try to act up to the Apostle's precept. God has taken from us some one very dear to us, some one whose life was so entwined into our own that we know not how we can live when it has been taken from us. And yet how much there is for which we may be thankful. In our Prayer Book as it was before the late Revision one of the prayers in the

Burial Service contained these words: "We give Thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world". Other words were substituted for these, because it was said that it was hard to ask those who grieved sorely for their loss to join in such a thanksgiving. Those who objected to the old words forgot that the thanksgiving for the release of him who had been taken was the Church's thanksgiving, uttered by her Minister for the removal of one of her members from that portion of her body which is exposed to the miseries of this sinful world to that larger portion, which in a happier state at the other side of the river of death is awaiting the coming of the Church's Lord. And they forgot, too, that if mourners standing by the open grave are invited to join in the thanksgiving, it is no more than they have been taught to do, not only by S. Paul but by our Lord Himself. "Blessed," He says, "are they that mourn," and if sorrow is a blessing, that surely is a strong reason why we should be thankful for it. For the present it does not seem to be joyous but grievous—

> But wait till the trial is over
> And take thy heart again,
> For as gold is tried by fire,
> So a heart must be tried by pain.

SERMON XV.

COGITAVI DIES ANTIQUOS.[1]

I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.—Ps. lxxvii. 5.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee.—Ps. xxxix. 7.

IN that metrical version of the 90th Psalm with which we are all familiar, the author (Dr. Watts) has imported into the first verse an idea derived from many other Psalms though not found in the verse itself.

The Psalm begins, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place (P.B.V., "refuge") in all generations". In the hymn this is rendered:—

> O God, our help in ages past,
> Our hope for years to come.

It was no doubt a natural feeling, the impulse of a trusting heart, that led him to regard thankfulness for past help as so linked to hope for future aid that the one feeling necessarily involved the existence of the other. Can we doubt that he was right? These are the two feelings that I desire to link together in your minds by the two passages which I have read to you. In the former of them the thoughts of the Psalmist had turned to the past. He is living in a sad present, and though in his

[1] Preached on the last day of the Nineteenth Century. S. Patrick's Cathedral.

trouble he had sought the Lord, he failed at first to find comfort in Him until he realised that his doubts and fears were the offspring of his own infirmity, and then in the remembrance of God's wonders of old his soul found comfort. In the second passage which I have read to you, the standpoint of the Psalmist is so far the same that he too was in trouble, but he looked to the future rather than to the past, as he asked, "Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee".

It is from a different standpoint that I desire to address you this evening. We stand to-night in a position which no one of us has ever occupied before, and which no one of us shall ever occupy again. It is for that reason that I have invited you to come here this evening. The closing hours of every year are suggestive of solemn thoughts, but to-night we stand at the bed of a dying Century. Nineteen hundred years have passed since the Son of God came to visit us in great humility, since He took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. He told His Apostles ere He left them that He would come again in His glory and all the holy angels with Him. He told His beloved Apostle after He had returned to His Father's house that His return would not be long delayed. "Behold," He said "I come quickly," but nineteen centuries have passed away, and scoffers ask, Where is the promise of His coming? and weak and doubting hearts cry, "Will the night soon pass?" and we have but one answer to give to such questions. God's times cannot be measured by human standards. One of our days—such a day we may suppose as that of the Annunciation, or the Birth at Bethlehem, or the Death on Calvary, or the Resurrection on the first Easter morning—one such day may be to Him before Whom all its issues lie spread

out as a thousand years, while a thousand years of human calendars may to Him be but a day. Our practical concern is with our own measurements of time, and with the lessons which the beginning or end of its recurring periods are calculated to impress upon us. It may be said indeed that our division of time into centuries is but an arbitrary and conventional arrangement, and that even the nations that maintain it have not always agreed as to the day on which each century begins and ends. This no doubt is true, but it does not alter the fact that many minds are more impressed by the end of the last year of a century than by that of any of the other years which go to make it up, and that this feeling is one which may be, and ought to be, used in the service of God, for His glory and the accomplishment of His desire to draw all men to Himself.

Look first at the century which has now but a few hours to live. The memory of some of you does not reach back even as far as the beginning of its last quarter. And yet even to you those closing years, when compared with the closing years as history records them of the century which preceded it, present a picture which seems almost the picture of another world. Those of us whose memories carry us back far beyond the middle of the century can recall a time when men were but beginning to learn their power to make the hidden forces of Nature subservient to their will, when steam engines were in their infancy, and railway locomotives were regarded as impossible, and all the many things by which modern invention and discovery have so largely added to human happiness and comfort were still hidden from our knowledge. Think of all that has been done for the relief of human pain by the use of anæsthetics, of the enormous advance in the practice of

surgery, and the gradually increasing knowledge of the causes of disease, though our knowledge of its remedies may be still in its infancy. These are among the achievements of the last half of the nineteenth century.

It has indeed been a wondrous century in the annals of the world. Shall we essay to write its epitaph? Shall we erect a monument on which to inscribe it? If we seek one let us look around us. It has erected its own monument—one more lasting than brass.

It is of some of the triumphs of the nineteenth century that I wish to speak to you, though mostly triumphs of a kind different from those of which I have spoken. I must pass over the political events of our own history—the extension and consolidation of the British Empire—the wars in which we have been engaged—the perils through which the nation has passed—the deliverances which have been vouchsafed to her by the good hand of God. These and many others I cannot notice now. But as I have referred to the results of modern discovery as leading to the promotion of human happiness, I would like to add a word of caution. We naturally look on the bright side of the picture which the material progress of the nation presents to us, but in progress, whether material or intellectual or religious, there is often another side to the picture which we should not ignore. All that glitters is not pure gold, though we may try to fancy it is. In this world our gains and losses are for the most part, as the Preacher says of prosperity and adversity, "set the one over against the other". Our losses, we know, are often true gains, and our gains are often true losses.

It is hard to strike the balance, but there is no need that we should, if we will but bear in mind that as all is not loss that seems to be loss, so neither is all gain that

seems gain. Can we doubt that this is true of those triumphs of the nineteenth century in some of the fields of which I have spoken?

We are naturally proud of the achievements of the human intellect, even though we have had no share in the work, and we expect still greater results in the future. But some go further. The secrets of Nature, they say, are being gradually drawn from the recesses in which she has so long hidden them. She cannot conceal them any longer, and knowledge is power, and the more men know of Nature's secrets the greater will be their power over the forces of Nature until these are all made subject to them; and when in addition men have attained to the knowledge of the means of averting disease, or at least of curing it, the human race, shaking off the fetters which now impede it, will go on to perfection. But is it not plain that men who indulge in these speculations leave God quite out of their count? They speak of Nature's laws, and Nature's forces, and forget that Nature is but another name for God. They boast of the marvellous results of human invention and discovery, and forget that these are the outcome of the operation of the Holy Spirit of God working through the medium of human intelligence and revealing His secrets to men at such times and in such measure as He thinks fit. Here then is the danger that lies often concealed in the path of human progress. It can be seen if we will open our eyes. Whatever may be the cause, the fact is plain that the sovereignty of God and His interposition in human affairs are less recognised than they used to be. Many of us can remember when the occurrence of war, or pestilence, or famine, called forth from the Sovereign an appeal to the nation to humble itself before the great Ruler of the world

and implore His help and protection, and when the restoration of peace, or the cessation of the pestilence or the famine, brought to us a similar call to public thanksgiving. But all this is now a thing of the past, and the majority of the nation have acquiesced in it without a murmur. Why is this? Is it not in part the result of the cause which I have suggested, that man's successes in discovery and invention are leading him to suppose that all things are possible to human skill, and that all the still undiscovered secrets of Nature are discoverable by human ingenuity, and that there is therefore no occasion to call for the interference of God? No occasion, and some say, no use; for the passing century has produced a large number of scientific men who maintain that God never does interfere in the government of the world, and that to ask Him to do this is to ask Him to do what He will not, and possibly cannot, do. Opinions of this kind which are at present, perhaps, only in the air, and which have not yet, except with a few, hardened into beliefs, are yet sufficient to have so unsettled the minds of many that they have almost ceased to regard God as a factor in their lives, or as a Being from Whose operations they have a reason to expect anything good or to fear anything evil. In old times God, speaking by the prophet Isaiah, referred to His interference in the government of the world as affording proof of His being the world's God, and to the helplessness of false gods to do either good or evil as proof that they were no gods. If we now reduce Him to that condition of helpless inactivity from which He challenged the idols to escape if they could, how can we continue to believe that He is, in any true sense, the God of this world, a God Whom we can love and in Whom we

can trust, Who we can believe was man's help in ages past, and can be his hope for years to come?

And much of what I have said applies to those speculations with regard to the origin of man which have such attractions for many minds, and which have pushed man's Creator so back into an immeasurable past that except for a few minds the idea of the relationship between man and his Creator must be entirely lost. This is not the time to discuss the general theory of Evolution. I would only remind you that it is but a theory for which no evidence ever has been, or probably can be, offered. But as to the application of the theory to the origin of man, I must add this, that in the account of the origin of the living inhabitants of this present world given in the first chapter of Genesis, there is a broad distinction drawn between those living creatures which the earth or the waters were called upon to produce, and that one living being of whom it is expressly stated that God created him "in His own image," and again, in another account of his origin, that "God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life", I shall be told that the first chapter of Genesis is not history, but merely a hymn or psalm of Creation, but call it what you will, it is given by God to His children for their instruction. It is God's lesson in Creation. Is it likely that He would have left His children for several thousand years learning from His lesson that man was created in a different way from all other living creatures, if he owed his existence to the process of Evolution to which, it is assumed, they owe theirs?

But other subjects demand our attention. What of the Church in the nineteenth century? I can speak only of that branch of the Holy Catholic Church of which the

Church of Ireland forms a part. I mean the great Anglican Communion which has its home in the British Empire and the United States of America.

Of one event in the history of our own branch I must say a few words. The middle of the nineteenth century found the Church in Ireland a part of the United Church of England and Ireland, which was then the Established Church of those parts of the realm. The Church in Ireland, which had been often the object of attack but had hitherto escaped from its assailants, which had been often by them "condemned to death" but seemed "fated not to die," was living in fancied security, when suddenly, or at least with scant warning, an Act passed the Legislature which dissolved the union between the Churches of England and Ireland, disestablished the Church of Ireland, and while leaving to the existing clergy the incomes which they possessed, deprived the Church of all the property, with the exception of recent endowments, with which the piety of former generations had endowed her. The blow was a severe one. To those who had little faith in the great Head of the Church, it seemed an almost deadly wound. Her enemies thought the same and waited in expectation of her fall. But neither the fears of the one, nor the expectations of the other were realised.

The Church has survived the blow, she is poorer in money, but richer in some at least of those things which are the true riches of a Church. Richer in the love of her people, richer in the devotion of her ministers, richer in the heartiness of her public services, richer in the increased number of her Communions and Communicants. Richer, vastly richer, in the fact that her lay members no longer are forced to stand idle in the market-place as those whom no man has hired, but have been admitted

to their rightful share in all the Church's Councils and encouraged to take an active part in the Church's work. These are among the gains which the Church's loss has brought, and I should be sorry to say that the gains do not more than compensate for the loss. We look back through the thirty years that have elapsed since men spoiled the Church's goods. No, not her goods, those they could not rob her of, but merely her accidents of wealth and position. We look still further back to the early days of the century, and, as we compare the Church of Ireland as we know it now with all its imperfections, with the Church then, as we learn its state from contemporary writers, we cannot but lift up our hearts in thankful gratitude to Him Who never forsook His Church even in days when faith was weak and love had waxed cold, and Who, though He chastened and corrected her, did not deliver her over unto spiritual death, but has been and is, we trust and believe, preparing her for fresh outpourings of His Holy Spirit, and, it may be, bringing again those days of old when her sons were His messengers to the nations, and when by their preaching He caused the light of the Gospel to shine through many of the dark places of the world. This leads me to speak of one feature in the life of the Anglican Church which has become prominent in the last half of the present century—I mean the great awakening of missionary zeal and effort. Perhaps it is a warning to us of the near approach of the time of which our Lord spoke when He said: "This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come". At least it is a sign that the Church has been aroused to the urgency of her Lord's command, "Go ye unto all the world and preach the Gospel to every

creature". If that were the only blessing that God had bestowed upon His Church in the nineteenth century it would be sufficient to make that century noted in the annals of Christianity, for it would prove that the Church's Lord had not forsaken her even in the days of her coldness and apathy, and had not forgotten His promise to be with her always, even though she had forgotten the command with which that promise was linked.

But that is not the only evidence of the Divine help which the annals of the Anglican Church of the nineteenth century will record. There were two events in that history which cannot be passed without notice. Each of them had its special blessings and each its special dangers, but, both in the events themselves and in the order in which they occurred, we can recognise the guiding hand of God. I mean the revival of Evangelical Religion which took place in an earlier part of the century, and the revival of Church life which has taken place in the memory of a great many. I had intended to have spoken more at length, but time will not permit me.

And now, dear brethren, I cannot dismiss you to your homes without asking you to put to yourselves the question, What has the past century been to me? I have enjoyed many of its gifts, profited by many of its inventions, been relieved of suffering by its discoveries, been a sharer too, it may be in its sorrows as well as in its joys, but what is the impress that the years during which I have lived in it have left upon my heart? What are the thoughts which now fill your mind as you remember the years that are past? Are there any thoughts of past sins—past negligences, many things left undone that ought to have been done, many done that ought not? I fear it must be so with us all, but some are conscious of their offences and

sorry for them, and some, alas! are neither. Shall we lay this old century—old in years but dying in the fulness of its strength—shall we lay it in the grave without a thought of all that God has done for us in it, and of all that we might have done, and have not done for Him? Or shall we fall low on our knees before Him and cry, "Our Father Who hast ever loved with an everlasting love, and with loving-kindness hast sought to draw us to Thyself, forgive, for the sake of Him who died for us, all our many offences and keep us under Thy loving care and protection until Thou takest us to live with Thee for ever in Thine everlasting Kingdom."

SERMON XVI.

A NATION'S MOURNING.[1]

And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.—2 CHRON. xxxv. 24.

IT was no unreal mourning. No mere pageant of an outward sorrow that never touched the heart. No mere parade of official mourners with bare heads and rent garments. No! they may have mourned thus for some others of their departed sovereigns but it was not thus that they mourned for him. Their grief for him was sincere, for they loved him for himself—how could they do other than love him—and they revered him for his office. They loved him—all that was best in that fickle nation—when as a little child of only eight years of age he took his seat upon the throne of David. As his years increased and his character developed "he began while he was yet young to seek after the God of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left". And when, as soon as he came to man's estate, he began to purge the land from the abominations which his father Amon had set up, the earnest King, who laboured to bring the people back to the worship of God and to the observance of the Law which Moses had given them, must have won still more the affections of all among his

[1] Preached on the Sunday after the death of Queen Victoria, S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1901.

subjects who were capable of appreciating true nobility of character.

I assume that his people loved him, not merely because of their deep sorrow for his death, but because of the great influence which he exercised over them when he led them back to the worship of God; for as he was not a warlike king who led forth his armies to victory, his influence must have been that of his character, and character seldom influences for good except it be the character of one who is loved for himself. I have no doubt that there were some then—in all such cases there always are some—who were incapable of appreciating the nobility of his character, and in them his life excited no enthusiasm and his untimely death awakened no sorrow, and they could regard the national mourning with cynical indifference and declare that they could see no reason why they should share in the universal sorrow. But despite such detractors of the dead monarch—if any such were found among the people—the tears of the nation flowed unrestrained, and Jeremiah the prophet wrote for his burial a funeral dirge, and for many years afterwards the lamentation of Josiah became a national dirge, and the singing of it was made an ordinance in Israel. Yet if these mockers would only have believed it, there was one reason why they should have mourned for the death of Josiah, since in his life the fate of the nation was bound up. For God had declared that He would bring evil upon the nation, even all the curses that were written in the book of the Law, because they had forsaken Him, and burned incense unto other gods, and that His wrath would be poured out upon Jerusalem and should not be quenched, but that Josiah should be gathered to his fathers before the day of vengeance came, and should not see the evil

that God would bring upon the people. And thus the life of Josiah stood between the nation and the ruin which fell upon it so soon after his death. For his sake the sword of Divine wrath was sheathed for a time and should not be drawn forth till he had been taken from the evil to come.

It may seem strange that the execution of a Divine sentence should be made thus to depend upon the life of an individual, but there is nothing in this which at all differs from the modes of the Divine government as set before us in the Old Testament. We cannot read either Old Testament history or prophecy without seeing this, that the destinies of nations are described there as so wrapped up in those of their rulers that the sin of the ruler was believed to bring calamity upon the nation, as for instance in the case of David whose sin in numbering the people was punished by a pestilence of which 70,000 men died, while on the other hand, as in the case before us, the piety of Josiah was rewarded by the suspension of a Divine sentence which was pronounced upon the nation. And this I may remark is true not merely of God's government of His chosen people, which may be supposed to have been to some extent of an exceptional character, but of His dealings with heathen rulers and nations also. It is no doubt in the Old Testament only that we find mention of these features of the Divine government, but the New Testament does not give any intimation that God governs the world now on any principles different from those on which He governed it in the ages before the coming of Christ. But though we have no reason for supposing that He does, yet it is plain that Old Testament ideas on this subject are not in accordance with modern habits of thought, and that the tendency of

the present day is to regard national prosperity and national adversity as wholly the results of the people's prudence, and foresight, and energy on the one hand or of their want of these qualities on the other, but that either should be affected by the moral character of their ruler, whether he be a Josiah, or an Ahab, it is mere folly to imagine. And yet if we are to believe Old Testament history and prophecy, there was a time when it was not folly to imagine it, but it was a truth written plainly in many declarations made by God Himself to His servants the prophets.

There is one fact in the history of Josiah which I cannot pass unnoticed. I suppose there are few who have read it for the first time without a feeling of disappointment when they come to the account of his death. Was it not hard, they think, that he should have been thus cut off in the flower of his age?

He had laboured earnestly for the glory of God and the good of his people—had bound them in a solemn covenant to serve the God of their fathers—had restored the observance of the long neglected Passover feast and had cleansed the Temple and prepared it for the sacred rites for which it had been built; and in the midst of his yet unfinished labours there came to him what no doubt he felt to be a solemn call to go forth to resist the march of the army of the King of Egypt through Northern Palestine. But his resistance was of no avail. The King of Egypt "slew him at Megiddo when he had seen him". And so died the best King that ever sat on the throne of David—died leaving his work unfinished, and his throne to be filled by his two sons in succession, of each of whom it is recorded that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord," and leaving the people, whom he loved and who had con-

tinued faithful to the covenant of God during his lifetime, to be again led astray by evil rulers, until the wrath of God, which had been restrained for his sake, "arose against His people till there was no remedy". It seems to us to have been a sad ending to so good a life. But here our lips are sealed. We stand silent before the mystery of the Divine will. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His Counsellor? What He has done in the past, what He does in the present, we know not now but we shall know hereafter. Some of His most earnest workers He calls to lay down their work, leaving it, we think, but half done. Others He leaves till the weary worker longs for rest, and though we cry, Oh! spare him to us if it be but for a little, He calls him to rest from his labours and join the company of those who wait for their Lord. Of the former we have an instance in the case of the good King Josiah. Of the latter in that of one who is now in the thoughts of us all—the good and great Queen —best and greatest of those who have filled the throne of this kingdom—our loved, and lamented Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria.

I place her life beside that of King Josiah. They have points of resemblance as well as of contrast. If we date his reign from the time when at the age of sixteen he began to seek after the God of David his father, and when we may assume he became fully conscious of the responsibilities of the high office to which he was called, we may compare with him the young girl who was suddenly awakened from her sleep to be told that she was Queen of England. Those whose memories do not carry them back to that day, sixty-three years ago, have read how then, and on the eventful days that followed, she attracted all who were brought into contact with her, and how great

was the enthusiasm excited in the nation as by little and little the people began to know her better, until they learned how earnest were her efforts for her people's good. And their admiration and enthusiasm gave place to a deeper feeling of warm affection and her throne became firmly established in their hearts. Then we know there came to her a great sorrow which long darkened the joy of her happy life, and in it she learned those lessons which affliction alone can fully teach. More perfect sympathy with the sorrows—yes, and with the joys too—of others. More readiness to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep; and thenceforth we know her not merely as the Queen whom we had revered and loved, but as the tender-hearted loving woman, ever ready to sympathise with human suffering, and to pour into sorrowing hearts the balm by which the wounds of her own had been relieved. I pass over her qualifications as a ruler, to which this nation probably owes more than it has learned, or ever will learn. Prominent statesmen who have served her have told us of her profound knowledge of public affairs, and that she "impressed her ministers (to quote the words of the present Prime Minister[1]) with a profound sense of the penetration, almost intuition, with which she saw the perils with which we might be threatened in any course it was thought expedient to adopt".

But I would rather speak of the influence which her blameless, unselfish life has had upon the general character of the nation and the general tone of society. The Queen's domestic life, its joys and its sorrows, was not carefully hidden away from her people as something too high for them to look into. It was her wish to take them

[1] Lord Salisbury.

on many occasions into her confidence, and let them see something of her inner life, and then they learned that high place and power had left her woman's heart untouched, and that the domestic virtues had found in her palace a home as safe and sacred as in the humblest Christian household. We are apt to think that most of us live so completely outside the influence of the throne and the Royal Court that our lives can in no way be affected by it; but if any power could show us a picture of what the state of society would have been in these islands in this first year of the twentieth century if for the last sixty-three years the throne had been filled by sovereigns like the immediate predecessors of our late gracious Queen, is there one of us whose heart would not be filled with gratitude to Him Who so loved our nation that He gave us such a sovereign? And shall we now complain because He Who gave has taken away? Surely not. Though we humbly bow to the Divine will we cannot but mourn our loss. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for good King Josiah, but now a mighty empire, on which the sun never sets, mourns the good and great Queen who has been taken from us; and this little island of ours which by the grace of Him Who has doubtless not forgotten her work and labour of love when many centuries ago she held up the torch of Divine truth amidst the darkness of the surrounding nations—has been granted a share in the glory and dominion of that great empire, joins in the universal mourning, and as we mourn there falls upon our ears the prayer that goes up from many hearts that the spirit of Victoria may rest on her successors, and that the memory of a reign, unparalleled in glory and blessing, may be a star to guide them in her footsteps.

SERMON XVII.

THE SUBLIME CONDESCENSION.[1]

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.—S. JOHN i. 14.

YOU are all familiar with the petition in the Litany, "By the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation, good Lord, deliver us". Have you ever thought what these words mean?

The prayer is addressed to the Son of God Who was manifest in the flesh. His holy Incarnation is His clothing Himself in human flesh, being made flesh, taking our human nature into union with His Divine nature, so uniting them "that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person never to be divided". That this is one of the mysteries which S. Peter tells us "angels desire to look into" we can scarcely doubt. "Without controversy," says S. Paul, "great is the mystery of godliness." And of the facts which he speaks of as making up that great mystery, the first which he mentions is "God was manifest in the flesh". If you have never realised the fact that this is a great mystery, it must be because you have never seriously thought about it. "The right faith," we are told, "is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man, . . . perfect God

[1] Preached on Christmas Day. S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1892.

and perfect Man, . . . who although He be God and Man yet He is not two but one Christ".

Is not this a mystery? Who can explain it? How can the same being be both God and man? How could the perfections of the Divine nature be so concealed as not to be manifest to all who saw Him? How could the imperfections of the human nature be so concealed that no trace of them should be apparent in a life which was carefully scrutinised by most bitter enemies, and that He should be able to say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" Scripture has given us some help towards understanding this part of the mystery. S. Paul tells us in the Epistle to the Philippians that when He Who was in the form of God took upon Him the form of a servant, He *emptied* Himself, for that is the real meaning of the word which in our version is rendered "made Himself of no reputation". He emptied Himself. Now whatever else this word may mean, there can be little doubt that it means this—that He laid aside the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, so that there was nothing in His outward appearance to mark Him as differing from other men. And then we are also told that though He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, He was Himself conceived without sin, and was thus free from those sinful imperfections which exist in even the best of ordinary men. But even after all this has been taken into account there still remains an inexplicable mystery in the fact that the same Being was both God and Man. We believe in the fact though we cannot comprehend it, because God has told us that it is a fact. "The Word," says the inspired Apostle, "was made flesh."

Who is this "Word"? We look back to the first verse of the chapter and we read, "In the beginning was

the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". And then again, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." It was a Divine Being then Who was made flesh, the very Being by Whom all things were created, even more than this if we bring in the teaching of S. Paul who tells us that all things were created not only "by Him" but "for Him". He is the final cause of creation as well as its efficient cause. We do not know when creation commenced. Universes may, for ought we know, have come into existence and passed out of it before the universe in which this little world of ours is but a speck was called into being; but, unless we believe matter to be eternal, there must have been a time when it was first created. Push that time back as far as you will, there must have been an eternity behind it in which the Almighty in His threefold Personality reigned alone. It is hard, I may say impossible, for us to grasp the idea of the existence of a being who never came into existence but has existed from all eternity, but it would be harder still to conceive God as coming into existence, an effect of the most stupendous character produced without any cause. This is to the human mind a difficulty greater still, and so Theists for the most part adhere to the belief that God has existed from all eternity.

No doubt there are difficulties in this as there are in every belief of which God is the subject. There is something inconsonant with our idea of God in the supposition that for long eternal ages He retained a solitary existence, and that with the power to fill space with shining worlds and to people them with beings capable of glorifying Him, He abstained from all exercise of creative power. Does the revelation which God has made of Himself in Holy

Scripture give us any help in this difficulty? I think it does, and that by two revelations which it makes of the nature of God. One is the doctrine of the Trinity, the other is that "God is *Love*". The latter would no doubt add to the difficulty but for the former, for love implies an object and cannot exist without it, but the doctrine of the Trinity teaches us that even in the solitude of the eternal ages love was not without an object, and that in the love of the eternal Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father, and of both for the Holy Spirit, there was abundant room for the exercise of that quality which is, we are told, the very essence of the Divine Being. But let us come back to that which most concerns ourselves to know. We want some answer to the question—why did the Word become flesh? Why did the Son Who had been for all eternity in the bosom of the Father, take upon Himself the nature of one of His own creatures? The answer is to be looked for in the history of this our world and chiefly of man. How far other worlds are affected by the Incarnation of the Son of God we do not know, save as far as it is suggested by such passages as that in S. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, in which he affirms that "it pleased the Father to reconcile all things to Himself by Christ, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven". Why, if the Incarnation was intended to influence the history of the whole created universe, this world should have been selected as the scene in which it should take place, is a question which we cannot hope to answer and need not ask. Our chief concern, however, is with this world in which we live. When God made this world He made it for Himself, and when He created man and gave him dominion over the world, it was that he should hold the world for Him as His viceregent.

But when God made man a free agent and endowed him with a free will, He gave to man the power of frustrating the designs of His love and goodness. And man by his sin did frustrate them. He ceased to hold the world for God and gave it up as far as he could into the hands of God's enemy. How was God to recover His lost dominion? No doubt He could do so by an exercise of power. He could withdraw from man the gift of free-will and force him into subjection to His authority. He might have made men holy by making them no longer free, but He did not desire to win men back to their allegiance by an exercise of power. The world, and more especially man, had been emanations of His love, and it was by love that the world was to be reconquered. Thus commenced the great work of Redemption—a work foreseen, provided for, before the world was, but accomplished in time. The Son of God, the second Person in the ever blessed Trinity, took upon Him to deliver man. He was the Word of God—the Word by Whom the heavens were made—the Word Who had spoken through the prophets and revealed to men Him Whom no man hath seen at any time. But a time came when He was to reveal God in another way, and not merely to reveal Him but to bring man into closer union with Him, not merely to bring God nearer to man, but to raise man nearer to God, to restore to man that image of God in which he had been created but which he had so sadly marred, to bring back to man that life which sin had killed. For this "the Word was made flesh". For this the Son of God took our human nature into eternal union with His Divine Person. For this He emptied Him and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man.

This was the great event for which, during the silence of past ages, ere Nature had yet attained a voice with which to tell the glory of God, preparation was being made, the great event towards which creation, from its first beginnings until it finally culminated in man, was ever pointing, an event which though enacted on this our little world has possibly had, as I have said, effects of which we cannot tell the extent.

To-day the Church, which He Who was thus Incarnate in our flesh founded, invites us to contemplate this wondrous mystery. Come, it cries to us, and look into that lowly manger of Bethlehem, and join in the adoration of the shepherds who had learned from an angelic messenger Who it was that lay there:—

> Come, all ye faithful,
> Joyful and triumphant;
> Come and behold Him
> Born the King of Angels;
> Come, let us adore Him,
> Christ the Lord.

Is that Babe That lies cradled in the manger indeed the great God by Whom all things were made? Believe it, and with it believe that in Him our poor nature has been exalted to the right hand of the Most High, and that by Him there has been opened for us a new and living way to the eternal mansions of glory. Doubt it, and with that doubt a cloud darkens all our hopes for the life beyond the present one. Jesus of Nazareth has indeed been a great power in the world; no one can doubt that. But if He was a mere man, He has done for us all that He can do. Human nature still stands on the same level as ever, and we have followed a cunningly devised fable when we believed the Apostle's declaration that we had been made "partakers of the Divine nature".

You are not—no, you are not—prepared to loose your hold of this hope set before you in the Gospel. No, this Babe lying in the manger is in your eyes more than a mere human child. You gaze upon Him with adoring eyes. Infant though He be—O mystery of mysteries!—He is your God. You cannot doubt it. No, you will not listen to those who bid you doubt it, but you will listen to the invitation that bids you "Come and worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord your Maker," and, as you do, the song of the angelic choir whose

> wondrous sound
> Is echoed on for ever

bursts upon your ear, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men".

SERMON XVIII.

FAITHFULNESS.[1]

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—Rev. ii. 10.

These are the words of the risen and exalted Saviour. His beloved Apostle heard them and was bidden to write them. In his vision he heard his Master's voice say to him, "Unto the angel of the Church in Smyrna write these things, saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive". His own death and His own triumph over death were the thoughts in His mind as He sent a message to His suffering Church. He knew their tribulation and poverty. He knew the blasphemy of their enemies—men who claimed to be of this Church of God but were of the synagogue of Satan. But He said, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." There had been a time when words such as these had, we may believe, brought comfort to His own soul. For He too had felt the human weakness which shrinks from approaching pain. He had prayed in His agony, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," and there had come to Him a messenger from His Father to support and strengthen Him. We may well imagine that the message which he brought

[1] Preached on Easter Day. S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1891.

to Him was of the same character as that one which He when He had fought and conquered sent to His suffering people, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life". Perhaps some one may think that the feeling to which these words appeal is too human a one to have influenced Him, and that though we may conceive God as holding up to *us* a crown of celestial glory as the reward of the faithful, we cannot conceive His doing so to Christ. But these ideas, though inspired by reverence, are not in accordance with what Holy Scripture teaches us. That the exaltation of the man Christ Jesus—Man and God—to the right hand of God, was in some sense the reward of His suffering and death is plainly asserted both by prophet before the fact and by Apostle after it. Isaiah concluded that marvellous chapter in which he foretold with such minute accuracy the sufferings of Christ with the words, "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors". S. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians affirms the same: "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name". These passages must be accepted as statements of fact, whatever difficulty we may have in understanding them. And then as regards the idea that the feeling to which the promise in the text appeals is too human to be ascribed to the Son of God, we must remember that He was and is perfect Man as well as perfect God, and that we are fully justified in ascribing to Him all sinless human feelings.

There can then be no difficulty in supposing that a

message of this kind was the message sent from Heaven to the Captain of our Salvation, in that dark hour when He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him That was able to save Him from death.

He knelt alone in the Garden of Gethsemane. There lay spread out before Him all those terrible scenes through which before another day had ended He needs must pass. None of their horrors were hidden from Him. He saw Himself betrayed by one Apostle—denied by another—forsaken by all—mocked, and evil entreated, and spitted on—scourged, and crucified, and slain. He felt in anticipation the darkness which at the time of deepest physical depression should wrap itself around Him, and the darkness deeper still which should wring from Him the almost despairing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me". All this lay spread out before Him, and as His human weakness recoiled from bearing such a weight of suffering, He prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me". And there soon came an answer to His prayer. There appeared an angel from Heaven strengthening Him. We can, I say, easily imagine that the message which that angel brought Him from His Father was of the same kind as that one which He addressed to His persecuted Church at Smyrna: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life". But whether this was so or not, there can be no doubt that the words describe two facts in His life—He was faithful unto death, and He received a crown of life. Two days ago we met to commemorate the death which ended His life of faithful trust and obedience. To-day we hail our risen Lord—Him Who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore—Who has conquered death and received a crown of life.

Let us think of this for a few moments for it is a fact which deeply concerns us. Jesus Christ, our brother in the flesh—Who not only shared with us our common nature but Who gathered into Himself all the divergent threads of human nature and placed Himself at the head of the human race—He rose on this day from the dead, and became the first-fruits of them that slept. You have often heard of the place which the Resurrection of Christ holds in the Christian system. You know that the whole truth of Christianity is bound up in the fact of Christ having risen from the dead, and that, as S. Paul tells us, if Christ be not risen our faith is vain. There is no hope for man beyond the grave—death is an eternal sleep, and all who have fallen asleep in Christ deluded with a vain hope of heaven have perished. You have heard all this often. I know not if there are any here to whom the words of Holy Scripture and the testimony of the Church are like those words spoken to the Apostles on the first Easter Day, which seemed to them as idle tales that they did not believe. There are many at the present day who though they do not renounce the name of Christian think it is not necessary to believe in the literal Resurrection of Christ from the dead. To those who follow that out to its logical consequences there comes—there must come—the belief that for man there is no life beyond the present. Nothing to hope for, nothing to fear. No heaven of rest and peace and bliss, no hell of tears and woe. Nothing left to him but the cheerless creed of the sensualist, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. But it is only the few who thus follow their denial of Christ's Resurrection to its natural consequences—there are but few who are ready thus to abandon the pleasing hope, the fond desire, the longing after immortality, which is

inherent in man. Strauss, one of the fathers of modern Naturalism, asserted that "the last enemy which shall be destroyed is" not death—as S. Paul affirmed—but "man's belief in his own immortality". If that is an enemy which is to be destroyed, it is no doubt certain that no other will survive it. But will it ever be destroyed? Not in this life if man's feelings continue what they are.

The belief in man's existence after this life has ended is ingrained in his nature. It is embodied in our ordinary forms of speech. When we say of one who has just breathed his last breath, He is gone, who is the "*he*" that is gone, and whither has he gone? The body that he had inhabited, his "remains" as we call it, all that is left to us after his departure, is not "he". *He* has gone whither we know not, and we bury *it* out of our sight. Can you shake off this belief in your own immortality? No, you cannot. Even if it could be shown to you to be irrational and unfounded, it would cling to you still. Do you want to escape from it? Surely *you* do not, you who have come here to commemorate the Resurrection of Him Who, as you profess to believe, by His death hath destroyed death, and by His rising to life again hath restored to us everlasting life. You need nothing to assure you that for you the question of a life to come is settled beyond all unsettling. But you are not done with it because it is settled thus far, for in that future there will be a life which is life indeed, and a life which is but a second death. Is there a heart here which does not sometimes ask, Which shall it be for me? Is there one here so wrapped in the present, so heedless of the future, as that these questions have never even occurred to him—Whither am I going? For what is my present life preparing me? Where shall I be found in that dread day when before

the Judge of the world all men—and I one of them—must stand? And where shall I be? At His right hand or at His left? O brother, if you have never asked such questions of yourself, ask them now. Would you know the answer to them? Ask the Judge Himself, and lay up in your hearts the words which are sufficient to tell you all you need to know. "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." You would like to spend your eternity in that world of joy and happiness, in which the blessed shall share in the pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore, and He tells you how you are to win a place there. He offers you a crown of life. He Who Himself had fought and conquered, and on Whose head are many crowns, He offers life as the reward of victory to all who conquer. Can you win it? Let me ask you first, Do you wish to *win* it? I do not mean to receive it. All will be glad to receive it. But to win it you must fight for it.

"I have fought a good fight," said the faithful Apostle, when he knew that the time was near when his course must be finished by the offering of his life. "I have fought a good fight . . . henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Are you to receive without any effort that which he won by a long and hard-fought struggle? Our struggle may be a less severe one than his, but our hope must rest on the same Divine promise to which he trusted, and to us that promise is contained in the words of the text, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life". Faithful to whom? Faithful to Christ, the Captain of our salvation, Who has chosen us to be His soldiers. When each of you in his infancy was signed with the sign of the Cross on his admission

into the Church of Christ, that mark was a token that hereafter we should not be ashamed to fight manfully under the banner of Christ against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier unto his life's end. That mark is upon you still, you cannot efface it. You must stand before Him at the last day as one of His soldiers. Shall it be as a faithful or as a faithless soldier? Brethren, are we faithful to Christ? Are we fighting manfully under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil?

Fighting against sin? There are, I doubt not, some here who love sin, and are its willing servants. Fighting against the world? There are those whose great object in life is to have it for their friend, to gain its favour, and enjoy its pleasures, and receive its good things. Aye, more than this, to fall down unto it and worship it and pray unto it and say "Deliver me, for thou art my God". And what of the other enemy against which we are pledged to fight? Men are trying to persuade themselves that there is no such being in existence as that Evil One of whom the Bible speaks. I think they forget that if this be so, then human nature, of which many of them have a very high opinion, is solely responsible for all the hideous vices and horrible crimes which degrade even civilised nations.

No, brethren, be sure there is an enemy—a strong man armed, our Master calls him—and with him we must do battle, if we would be faithful to Christ. And he too has his servants—aye, his soldiers—among ourselves: men and women who are fighting against Christ and for the devil. There are men in this city who revel in the corruption of the innocent, who destroy the purity of youth, and make a boast of having conquered the virtue of some weak

confiding heart. Oh! that Society would rise in its might and cast out all such destroyers of human peace and virtue! Oh! that they who profess to be its leaders, would show a determination to lead it into the way of at least moral virtue!

These are Christ's enemies. Sin, the world, and the devil. He is contending with them—and we profess to be His soldiers.

Are we faithful? If we are, what more glorious hope can this our Easter bring us than the promise, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life"?

SERMON XIX.

SURSUM CORDA.[1]

If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.—Col. iii. 1.

The Revised Version renders the first words of this passage more correctly, "If then we were raised together with Christ". The Apostle was evidently referring to what he had stated in the twelfth verse of the preceding chapter. I will read it from the Revised Version—"Having been buried with Him in Baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God who raised Him from the dead." All the leading events in the life of Christ find their counterpart in the life of the Christian. We cannot read S. Paul's Epistles without seeing how firmly that idea kept possession of his mind. The Christian life is the life of Christ reproduced in His people. Was He miraculously born by the operation of the Holy Ghost? So is the Christian born again by the same Divine power. Was Christ crucified, dead, and buried? The Christian is crucified with Christ, dead with Christ, and buried with Him. Did Christ rise again? The Christian too has risen with Christ. He does not stop even there, but says that God has not only raised us up with Christ but that He has made us sit with Him in the

[1] Preached on Ascension Day, S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1891.

heavenly places. And what is most remarkable about S. Paul's conception of the Christian life is that he does not, as we might have supposed, connect these events in our Lord's life with the matured life of the Christian, but with its first beginning. "All we," he said to the Romans, "who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death. We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death." "Buried with Him in baptism," he said to the Colossians, "wherein ye were also raised with Him." We might have thought, and indeed a great many persons do think, that these states of the Christian life are attained to only by those in whom that life is advancing towards maturity. But S. Paul regarded them otherwise. In his view they were not states to which the Christian attains after long struggle, but states in which God places the Christian, when He sends him forth to enter upon the struggle. The fact is that our views of what the Christian ought to be are so coloured by our knowledge of what in most cases he is, that we have in a great degree lost that conception of the Christian life which was present to the mind of S. Paul. We look at men as they are, and persuade ourselves that being what they are it is impossible to believe that God has ever done for them what His word tells us He has done. And that is not all. The denial, or at least the ignoring, of Christian privileges, leads to the denial, or at least the ignoring, of Christian duty, and Christians are satisfied to be what they are because they do not believe that God has ever done anything to raise them out of their present state.

Read such a passage as that which I have read to you from S. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. What ideas does it present to the minds of the majority of Christians? To many it probably does not convey any. It is only one

of those passages of Scripture to which they are accustomed to listen without attaching any meaning to them; while others who try to extract some meaning out of them regard them as what are called "counsels of perfection," that is to say, precepts which are not intended for ordinary Christians but merely for the few who seek to attain a position of exalted piety.

But what was S. Paul's meaning? He gives a precept, "Seek those things that are above." He gives a reason for it in the fact that Christ is sitting there at the right hand of God; he bases the duty of observing it on the fact that those to whom he wrote had been raised with Christ at their baptism.

The last of these lies outside the subject of this day's festival. Let us give our thoughts for a few minutes to the other two. First, there is the fact that Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God. In his Epistle to the Ephesians S. Paul spoke of the mighty power which God "wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand, . . . far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church." This is the Apostle's description of the present glory of Him Who for our sakes had stripped Himself of the glory which from all eternity He had had with the Father. He had made Himself of no reputation and taken upon Him the form of a servant and been made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man He had humbled Himself and become obedient unto death even the death of the cross, and therefore God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name which is

above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. To-day the Church commemorates Christ's entry upon this state of glory. Forty days ago we celebrated His glorious Resurrection from the dead.

It might have been thought that having thus finished the work of man's redemption He would have at once returned to Heaven, but He did not. Why He lingered on here we are not told, but we know how a portion of those forty days was spent. He showed Himself alive, we are told, to His Apostles by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. The Apostles needed much instruction as to the ordering of the Church which was to be built. Their habits of life had not prepared them for the work to which they were now called, and He, we may, I think, suppose, delayed His departure that He might speak to them of the things pertaining to the regulation of the infant Church. But it is plain that His continuance on earth could only be temporary, He still retained the human body which He had taken into union with Himself, but it had ceased to be a natural body, and had become a spiritual body. It still indeed bore the marks of what He had suffered for man. He could say to a doubting disciple, "Reach hither thy finger and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side"; but it was no longer subject to the limitations of a human body. It appeared suddenly among the Apostles when the doors were shut. It vanished out of their sight when He left them.

Thus He gradually weaned them from their natural clinging to His bodily presence, and prepared them for the time when He must go His way to Him that sent Him.

S. Luke is the only one of the Evangelists who gives us

an account of our Lord's Ascension into heaven. S. Mark merely mentions the fact, and the other two do not record it. When the day of His departure came, He and His Apostles met together in Jerusalem, and He led them out of the city up the ascent of the Mount of Olives—past the garden which had been the scene of His agony and of His betrayal—past the spot from which He had not long before looked upon the guilty city fast ripening for ruin, and had wept as He thought how soon her enemies would lay her even with the dust. "And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and it came to pass while He blessed them He was parted from them and carried up into heaven."

Where that heaven is we know not. Where is set that throne of God at Whose right hand He is set down for ever, has not been revealed to us, but that heaven is not, as some say, a mere state, but is also a place is evident from the fact that our Lord's glorified body is, and must be, somewhere, and where it is, there is heaven.

There are many thoughts which the Ascension of Christ suggests to us, but to-day I want you to fix your mind on the thought suggested by the text. "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." It is the thought suggested by the prayer which the Church to-day puts into our own mouths, "Grant that as we do believe thy only begotten Son to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend and with Him continually dwell."

Heaven, dear brethren, is not a strange country with which you have nothing in common. It is the dwelling place of God, it is the home of blessed Angels, but One Who was made in the likeness of man is there too. More than this, it is His desire to exalt that human race which

He has taken into union with Himself to that same heaven where He sits enthroned. Which of these two worlds—the world in which He lived, despised and rejected of men, or the world in which He rules the Sovereign of all—the world of sin and sorrow, or the world of purity and peace, is more worthy of our regard? On which shall we set our affections with the least chance of disappointment?

We know the answer very well, though we live as though we did not know it. Many of you are familiar with some of those old legends in which a man is supposed to have sold himself to the evil one and bartered his hope of heaven for the sake of wealth or honour, and you have never read such a story without feeling how unutterably foolish such a bargain was, and how insane the man must be who for a few years of pleasure sells an eternity of happiness. And yet such legends do but picture for us a choice which men are ever making between the things of earth and the things of heaven; between the things that are seen and the things that are not seen—the temporal and the eternal. The Apostle tell us what our choice should be and why it should be so. Seek those things that are above, set your affection on things above not on things on the earth. Is there any use, you ask, in my setting my heart on the things of Heaven? Can they ever be mine? Dare I, sinful as I am, lift up my eyes to that abode of purity and hope ever to share in its joys? Yes, you may, and that without fear of disappointment. For who is He to Whom all power is given in heaven and earth? Who is He that is sitting at the right hand of God? Christ—the Man Christ Jesus, He Who won these things for you by the sacrifice of His life. He Who loved you so that He gave up the joys of heaven, and endured

all the sorrows of earth, that you might obtain a home in that heaven which for you He left.

It is He Who invites you to seek the things which are above. You cannot doubt His power to give them to you, and you surely cannot doubt His willingness. What the things are which He has prepared for them that love Him we know not as yet, but we know enough to inspire us with an earnest desire to seek those things that are above. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him. That likeness will be, we cannot doubt, the great source from which the happiness of the blessed will spring. If then you ask "How am I to seek those things which are above when I do not know what those things are?" the answer is plain "Seek to be like Christ". The more you become like Him, the more you will love Him, and the more you love Him, the less you will set your affection on things of the earth. The more you love Him the more pleasure you will find in the thought that a day is coming when you will see Him as He is—see that Face which was once agonised with more than human suffering, but which shall then be bright with celestial glory, that Face which shall still wear the same divine look of love as when He trod this earth of old. Surely here is something worth living for—worth setting your affections upon. The things on the earth, take them at their best, often vanish just as we think we have grasped them, or prove of less value when we have obtained them than they seemed to be when we saw them from a distance, or in a thousand ways disappoint us. But here is a pleasure which can never fail to give joy. To look into the Face of Jesus—to live for ever in a world of which He is the eternal light—to know that that Face will never again be turned away from us in sorrow at our sin—that we shall never more grieve that

loving Heart—never more add a pang to the many which He endured for us—to know that thenceforth and for ever our lives will be devoted to Him, and will draw all their happiness from Him, that whatever may be the occupations of the future He will be the centre round which all our energies will circle, and that from His throne shall flow the river whose streams shall make glad the home of God's elect—are such thoughts and anticipations too high for ordinary Christians? S. Paul did not think so, nor S. John, nor S. Peter. To them they were the natural hopes and anticipations inspired by the Christian revelation. Why should not we share in them? We know but too well why it is. It is because earth-born clouds hide out from our view the eternal mansions of our Father. It is because while we profess to accept the Apostle's teaching we in practice reverse his precept, and set not our affections on things above but on things on the earth.

SERMON XX.

GUIDANCE.[1]

Hereby we know that He abideth in us by the spirit He hath given us.—1 JOHN iii. 24.

He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man but God who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit.—1 THESS. iv. 8.

THE course of human existence, and with it the whole history of the world, has been materially influenced, I may say entirely changed, by three events which are recorded in Holy Scripture. The first of these was the fall of man by the sin of the first man. The second was the Incarnation of the Son of God, His taking upon Him human nature to restore man to his lost position. S. Paul summarises the results of these two events in one short verse in his Epistle to the Romans: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life". Sin and death were the results of one, righteousness and life those of the other. No one can doubt the magnitude of these results and their influence upon human history.

It is not with either of these that I am now concerned. The third one is that which we commemorate to-day, the coming of the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, to dwell with, and in the Church, and with, and in the souls of individual Christians. It is strange how little most

[1] Preached on Whitsunday, S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1896.

persons think of this and yet its effects were manifested in all Christian lands and in all Christian hearts. It would be sad for the world, sad for human society if it were not so. Our modern civilisation of which we boast so much, our modern progress of which we are so proud, the knowledge which man is acquiring of the secrets of nature, the power which he is obtaining over the forces of nature, these would be far from a blessing to humanity if it were not that there is a power which is more than human directing and ruleing the hearts of men. We know something of ancient heathen civilisation, something of its intellectual progress and its cultivation of æsthetic taste, but we know too that however it succeeded in the culture of the intellect and the development of a love of the fine arts, it wholly failed to elevate the moral nature of man. That Christianity has not been as successful in that direction as it ought to have been we must all confess, but we know that that is the end at which it aims, and that its too frequent failures to accomplish it result from the opposition of the human will which resists its efforts.

There are two points of view from which we may regard the work of the Holy Spirit. We may consider it in its relation to the Church, or in its relation to the individual Christian. Primarily it would seem as if the gift which our Lord promised and which He sent down after His Ascension was a gift to the Apostles as the representatives of the Church, a gift that was intended to secure that the Church as being the body of Christ should be animated by the Holy Spirit, and that He should guide it into all the truth and keep it from falling into error. That the Apostles understood our Lord's promises in this sense is, I think, plain from the language which they used in giving the decision of the Church upon the question

raised at Antioch with respect to Gentile converts. The question was referred, as we are told in Acts xv., to the decision of the Church at Jerusalem, and the Apostles and elders assembled to consider it, and after some discussion S. James, who presided over the Council, gave their decision, which was then incorporated in a decree and sent to Antioch. That decree assumed two facts upon which its authority rested. One was that it was given by the constituted authority of the Church, in virtue, as we cannot doubt, of our Lord's promise to His Apostles that in binding obligations upon Christians or loosing them from them their acts would be ratified by God. The other fact was that their decree had a right to be regarded as the decree of the Holy Spirit under Whose guidance and direction they believed that they had acted. "It seemed good," they said, "unto the Holy Ghost and to us."

Of course this raises the question, Does this authority exist in the Church now? But this is a question which I could not discuss now, any further than to say that in the present divided state of Christendom there is no individual body of men which can speak in the name of the universal Church, and therefore that there is no one man and no body of men who stand in the same position towards the Church as the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem did, and consequently no body of men who have a right to say "It seems good unto the Holy Ghost and to us".

It is of the second aspect of the gift of the Holy Ghost that I wish chiefly to speak to you, that is to say, to the gift as bestowed upon individual Christians. This is the aspect which most nearly concerns each of us. Has that gift been really bestowed upon us? Some persons do not believe that it has been given thus bountifully. A few very good people may have received it, but that the

mass of Christian people—some of whom live ungodly lives and the majority of them careless lives—that they should be supposed to have received the gift of the Holy Spirit is, they think, inconceivable. There are some, I fear, who do not wish to believe that so great a gift has been bestowed upon them because they are conscious that they have not made use of it, and they know that we must give account to God of the use that we have made of His gifts. And perhaps they remember the fate of the slothful servant who hid his Lord's talent in the earth and did not use it.

But whatever men may think, or however they may deceive themselves, God's word seems to leave us in little doubt upon the subject. The prophets who foretold the coming of the Holy Ghost did not speak of the Divine gift as one intended for only a select few. On that day of Pentecost when He came down in fiery tongues upon the Apostles, S. Peter told the astonished multitude that the marvel which they witnessed was the fulfilment of a promise of God, that in the last days He would "pour out His spirit upon *all* flesh". The Apostles did not believe that every one who received the gift of the Holy Ghost manifested in his life the fruits of the spirit. On the contrary, they appealed to men to abandon their sinful lives on the very ground that they had received the gift and were dishonouring Him by their sins. "Know ye not," said S. Paul to the Corinthians, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (Cor. iii. 16, 17). And again, writing to some who were stained with a most grievous sin, he said (vi. 19): "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is

in you, which ye have of God," and again in the text, "He that despiseth," or rather (R.V.) "rejecteth, rejecteth not man but God Who has given us His Holy Spirit". We cannot conclude then that the Holy Spirit has not been given except in the cases of those persons in whom we can see evidences of His indwelling in their hearts, and it is much more in accordance with what we know of God to believe that He gives His Holy Spirit to all who are admitted into covenant with Him. The Church assumes this, for she prays for every infant about to be baptised that God would give him His Holy Spirit, and assures those who bring the infant for baptism that God has promised to give all that they had prayed for.

With this as the germ of a new life, God sends forth each of His children to enter upon their earthly course. It is but a weak and feeble germ, but so also is that other life which the unconscious infant brought with it into the world. That life will gather strength as it passes from infancy to childhood and from childhood to youth. But it will need care and nourishment, and without them it will not keep pace with the natural growth of the body. Can it be that that other life will grow strong and vigorous without those things which one needs for natural life? No, it cannot.

How long the germ of life may remain there undeveloped who can tell! He Who desireth not the death of a sinner is slow to take His Holy Spirit from us even though we think little of the gift and fail to make use of it, and even in the last hours of some wasted life there have at times appeared faint sparks of a fire which had not wholly expired, and which the grace of God has fanned into a flame, ere the pulse of bodily life had ceased to beat. There is no one of us then who can plead that if we are wholly

destitute of spiritual life it is because God has never given us any part with Him Who is the "Giver of life". He has given us the Holy Spirit and has always been ready to increase the measure of His gift in proportion to our capacity of profiting by it. Why is it that there are so many who have never once realised the fact that God has given them His Holy Spirit, who have never once offered an earnest prayer that God would give them a larger share in His manifold gifts? Some of you know that this is so. You think, perhaps, that you are quite capable of guiding your own steps and directing your own lives. Even if you were in doubt and perplexity it is not to Him you would turn. You may repeat the prayer, "Grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts," or the prayer for to-day, "Grant us by Thy Holy Spirit to have a right judgment in all things," but you attach no meaning to the words or you do not believe them if you do. "How," you say, "can the Holy Spirit direct and rule my heart, or give me a right judgment *in all things?*" How? In more ways than I could enumerate. Have you ever felt that you are, or have been, influenced by another person? How does he exercise that influence over you? You probably cannot tell, you only know it to be a fact; you feel it but cannot explain it. Have you ever felt the power of a will stronger than your own to which you feel forced to yield? Have you ever felt the power of sympathy, or that kind of attraction which draws one person to another, he knows not why? Can you explain any of these mysteries in your mental or moral nature? No, you cannot, but you do not on that account doubt their existence. Why then should you doubt the power of the Holy Spirit to influence your heart and your mind, and through them to guide and

direct your lives? Have you ever felt a good thought arising suddenly in your mind? A feeling of thankfulness, it may be, for some unexpected blessing, or a desire to do some act of kindness to another, or it may be perhaps a feeling that there is after all something better worth seeking for than the money or the pleasure which has engrossed you. Where do such feelings come from? Can you account for them? Perhaps they vanish as suddenly as they sprang up. They were there and are there no longer. Can you explain them in terms more clear than those in which our Lord described the operation of the Divine Spirit, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth"? Why should you hesitate to believe that such good thoughts are the whisperings of that Holy Spirit Who speaks to those who least expect to hear His voice? If it be true, as you so often hear, even though you scarce think of the meaning of the words, that "from God all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed," why should you regard all serious thoughts—thoughts that sometimes startle you and make you pause for a moment, and ask "Whither am I going? What is to be the end of my life here?"—as merely the result of some physical derangement, and refuse to regard them as the voice of God speaking to your soul?

How is it that men so readily forget that more than eighteen hundred years ago, the Son of God, exalted at the right hand of the Father, sent the Holy Spirit to dwell among men and in men, and that from that day of Pentecost upon which He came down to earth, He has been here to be the guide, and support, and comforter of all the children of God? How is it that even at the times when men need Him most they turn away from Him in a vain

effort to find elsewhere that which He alone can truly give? They are in trouble, and He is the Comforter. They are in doubt, and He is the sure guide. They are tempted, and He is the succourer of the tempted, but neither in their troubles nor their doubts, nor their temptations will they look to Him. And yet can any one doubt that the hearts and lives which are directed and ruled by Him are happier far than those which reject His rule and guidance? S. Paul contrasts the two masters which claim man's allegiance—the flesh and the spirit—as regards the results which each produces upon those who submit to its rule. Among the works of the flesh are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murder, drunkenness, revellings and such like; while the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Which would be happier, the man who gave himself up to be directed and ruled by the flesh, or the man who submits himself to the direction and rule of the Holy Spirit? Can any one doubt what is the answer to that question?

SERMON XXI.

THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES.[1]

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.—HEB. xii. 1, 2.

THE Church commemorates specially a few of the Saints of God. There are days appointed to remind us of the lives, and to set before us the examples of the Apostles and a few others. Formerly our Calendar contained the names of some good men and women who had suffered for Christ or who had been set for the defence of the Gospel, such men as Alban, the first English martyr, and Augustine and Ambrose; such noble women as Agnes and Perpetua, but as there were mixed up with them the names of others of whose right to be called saints there was much doubt, their names were, perhaps unnecessarily, removed from the Calendar at the late revision of the Prayer Book.

On this day the Church commemorates these and all other Saints of God, many who lived and died unknown to the world, but whose names are in the Lamb's book of life.

But some one says, "Why do you speak to us about

[1] Preached on All Saints' Day, S. Patrick's Cathedral, 1891.

Saints? Do you want us to worship them? Do you want us to pray to them?" No, I do not want you to do either. What then do I want? I want you to follow their good examples. If you look at the Collects appointed for the several Saints' days in the Prayer Book, you will see that there is generally some particular feature in their lives or characters which is commended to our imitation, or upon which some special prayer is founded. To-day we gather into one all these lines of Christian life, and calling to mind how all the Saints, differing as they did in their lives and characters, have been knit together in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of Christ, we pray for grace so to follow them in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which God has prepared for those that unfeignedly love Him.

Let us think a moment of the fact that is here stated: God has knit together His elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of Christ. In the Creed we say, "I believe in the Communion of Saints". Both Collect and Creed express the same fact, that all members of Christ's Church are united together by a sacred bond. But Christ's Church is not confined to those members of it who are now living upon the earth. The far larger part of it is formed of those who have passed the river of death, and whose spirits are now waiting the great day when the Church's Lord will come again and call their bodies from the sleep of death, and admit them to the eternal mansions. Our fellowship and communion is not then merely with those members of the body of Christ who are now alive upon the earth. It is with that larger portion of the Church at the other side of the river, itself but a part of that countless multitude, which

will one day stand before the throne of God clothed in white robes and with palms in their hands. Is it nothing to us that we have been admitted into this vast communion? Nothing to us that we can sometimes turn our eyes away from the Church on earth, torn by dissension and schism, corrupted by heresy, polluted by sin, and fix them upon that larger, purer, holier portion of the Church which has been delivered from the burden of the flesh. Who can read without some feeling of exultation those glorious words in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant". Surely if this is true we have a right to believe that we are not wholly separated from those who have gone before us to the unknown land. There are times when we are glad to think of this. Some one very dear has left us, gone we know not where, save that it is, we hope at least, to a better land, gone to be in joy and felicity, to be with Christ. Can he see us? Can he know ought of our state? Can he feel for us? Can he, does he, pray for us? There is no one to answer these questions for us, but our hearts often answer them to us, and as we sit in the silent chamber of death and look on that lifeless body from which he has departed, we cannot subdue the thought which then becomes almost a belief, that death has not wholly broken the bond that bound him to us, and that in death as in life he is still ours. Such thoughts may be, as many say they are, but foolish fancies. Such hopes may be wholly delusive, but who would forbid any one

who can to cherish them, or deprive them of the comfort which they bring in times of trouble?

To-day, however, our subject is a much larger one, and one as regards which we stand on a firmer basis than that of our individual feelings. Even if it were certain that death broke all bonds of human love, and that a spirit released from the body lost all knowledge of, and all interest in, those things and those persons with whom his earthly life was associated, it would not follow that the waiting Church in Paradise knows nothing of the struggling Church on earth. Perhaps this is the most we can infer with any degree of certainty from the passage before us. "We are," it says, "compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses." The idea in the mind of the writer is plain. He was about to speak of the Christian life as a race, he was going to tell the Hebrew Christians that they must run with patience the race set before them, and his thoughts naturally turned to scenes which he had witnessed at Grecian or Roman games. He saw the eager runners, stripped of every garment that could trip or impede them, straining every nerve, regardless of everything save the one, that the longed-for prize was in the judges' hands, and that only one could win it; and he saw the crowded spectators who sat around in thousands with their eyes fixed upon the runners, he heard the cheers which burst forth as the victor reached the goal. Was not all this but a picture of what was taking place in the Church of Christ? There too are the runners, there too are the judge and the prize. Is the race run in silence and solitude? Are there no spectators? None to watch the race, none to greet the victor? Oh no, far otherwise. We, the runners, are compassed about with innumerable witnesses. As they appear to the eye of faith

they are as a cloud above our heads, looking down upon us from their peaceful resting-place in Paradise. The writer of the Epistle had mentioned in the preceding chapter the names of some of these Old Testament heroes of faith whom he supposes to form a part of that cloud of witnesses, but time would fail, he said, to tell of all who had fought the good fight and won the crown of faith, men whom the world persecuted, but of whom the world was not worthy. They had been destitute, afflicted, tormented, but now their struggle was over, and they were watching the Church's struggle, waiting for the time when her warfare should be accomplished and her Lord and King should take His great power and reign—watching until the race should be over, and on many a head should sit a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge will give to all who love His appearing.

Why does he tell us of this cloud of witnesses? Is it merely to gratify a natural curiosity with regard to those faithful servants of God who have passed away? No, that was not his object. It was some practical lessons which he wished to impress upon the minds of those to whom he was writing. What effects ought the thought of this cloud of witnesses to produce upon us? What would be its natural effect? A race of which there are no spectators creates little enthusiasm in the minds of the runners. Each may be anxious to obtain the prize, and yet he will lack the encouragement which human sympathy affords. But we are not running in a race of which there are no spectators. We have thus everything to encourage us so to run that we may win the crown. How we are to run the text tells us. First, we are to lay aside every weight. Oh! how many are the weights with which men load themselves here! Have you laid them all aside

that you may be more free to run the race set before you? "I know of no weight," some one says, "that I need to lay aside." Do you not? Oh! how little can you know yourself if you think so! Is pride a weight? Surely you are carrying that if you are not carrying any other. It is a common burden, borne by many, and by none more surely than by those who think they do not carry it. And it is but one of many. What of that all-absorbing love of money, so common in this our day, which blinds men's eyes and leads them on step by step from one act of baseness and dishonesty to another, until, when their eyes are opened, they stand aghast at the depth of infamy to which they have sunk. These are extreme, though alas! not uncommon cases; but what of that desire to be rich through which S. Paul tells us men fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition? But it is not always thus destructive. No doubt it is not, but take it in its least injurious form and it is still a weight which the Christian runner must lay aside. There are many other such weights which I cannot enumerate. The more we know of ourselves the more we shall become conscious of those weights which we so often carry without being aware of them, and which are such hindrances to progress in the Christian life.

And then there is some sin—or it may be some sins—which easily besets each of us. Some sin to which we are peculiarly inclined by natural disposition or temperament, some of those sins which we try to excuse to ourselves by calling them *infirmities*, or it may be sins which we have, by yielding to them, allowed to obtain great power over us, and which easily beset us because we have almost lost the power of resisting them. They meet us at every turn,

they are ever about us, they trip up our feet as we try to run the race set before us. From whichever of these points of view then we regard sin, whether as a heavy burden which weighs down the soul and prevents all advancement in the Christian life, or as something which by causing him to stumble impedes his progress, it must be laid aside. The race set before us is the life appointed for us by God, the life which is intended to lead to, and end in, the better life yet to come, the life of perfect holiness and endless peace. To many the life here is a dark and sad one, to all it is in some sense a life of trial. "We have need of patience," we are told in this same Epistle, "that after we have done the will of God we might receive the promise." It is not in a moment—at least in the ordinary state of things—that we become meet to join the cloud of witnesses who have finished their course and now await their crown. It is, S. Paul tells us, by patient continuance in well-doing that we are to seek for glory and honour and immortality. It is not always easy to be patient, our efforts so often seem to fail; and sometimes the good that we would we do not, while it is the evil that we would not that we do; and to some life is long and weary, and they would be glad that it was over. But let us run with patience the race set before us, and we shall in the end receive the crown that fadeth not away.

There remains still one more direction given to the runner in the Christian race. How is he to know that he is keeping in the right course? Upon what is he to fix his eyes so that he may be sure that he is not diverging from the course set before him? He is to look to Jesus. To take Him as his model, to take His life as his pattern. How sad, how lonely, how brimful of sorrow

and suffering was His life, but He ran with patience the race set before Him, and He is set down at the right hand of God.

And He too is looking down upon us from the habitation of His holiness and His glory, His tender heart yearning over those for whom He gave His life. O how sad is the sight presented to His view! Men running in every direction out of the course set before them, fixing their eyes on every object but Him, running for wealth or honour or position, but with no thought of the crown of glory which He has for them that love Him. Will you not think of Him, brethren, you who are living careless, it may be sinful lives? Will you add more sorrow to that which He has borne for you by making *that* sorrow to have been borne in vain? And have we no thought of the cloud of witnesses? What if it be true that those who loved us here on earth have some knowledge of our present lives, what if it be true that they know whether we are, or are not, walking in the way that leads to God and Heaven? It may be true, and shall not the thought of its being at least possibly true have some influence upon our lives. O godless son of godly parents now gone to their rest, living without any thought of the world beyond, living perhaps in the indulgence of sinful lusts and passions, at least "earthly" if not "sensual"—O heedless daughter of a pious mother, now it may be among the cloud of witnesses, you who are living in pleasure and caring for little else besides, or worse still listening to the voice of the tempter who urges you to forsake the guide of your youth—what if those whom you have almost forgotten have not forgotten you? What if your lives are within their ken, and that even the joy of Paradise may be dimmed by the knowledge that you are living without God in

the world? You cannot bear the thought, you will not believe it, you will not, because you dare not. And yet it may be true, for we are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses, and who can tell how far their spiritual vision extends?

Let us then, dear brethren, follow their good example in looking steadfastly at Christ. It was thus that they won the race, thus that they obtained the crown. Let us catch as far as we can His light as it is reflected by His faithful servants, but let us not rest in that contemplation. We must look to the source of light, to Him Who is *the* light of the world, until of His infinite mercy our eyes also behold the King in His beauty, and we too form part of that great multitude which shall stand before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.

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